

3 *La*  
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A  
DISSERTATION  
On Reading the  
*CLASSICS,*

And Forming a  
JUST STYLE.

Written in the YEAR 1709.

And addressed to the  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
*JOHN* Lord *ROOS,*

The Present  
DUKE of RUTLAND.

By *HENRY FELTON*, D.D.

Principal of *Edmund-Hall*, Oxon,  
and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke  
of *Rutland*.

The FOURTH EDITION, with some  
*Alterations and Additions.*

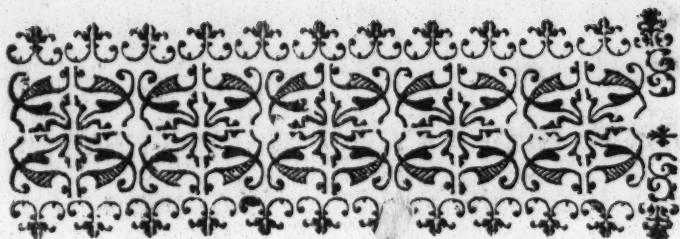
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THE  
PREFACE.



*THE following Sheets  
were the Product  
of some leisure  
Hours in the Coun-  
treys, about Twenty Years  
ago. They were written in  
the Year 1709, and not tran-  
scribed till the latter End of  
the next Summer, as the  
Reader will find by several  
A 2 Passages*

iv      The PREFACE.

*Passages up and down, which will clear the Time, and save the Critics the Trouble of making any Mistakes in their Conjectures. For want of such Informations, or from the Loss of them, Learned Men have been at a World of Pains in settling the Date of many excellent Pieces, and have differed vastly from one another, not only in a Day, or a Month, but even in a Year; nay, sometimes in two or three. But I have always observed, that they disagree most, where they differ least; the nearer they come to one another, the closer is*  
the

The PREFACE. V

*the Engagement; and the Critical War is always hottest, when there is nothing between them.*

*I hope the Readers will be so candid, as not to expect what they do not find; for I am very sensible, from the better Judgment of Mankind, that they will be under a strange Temptation to blame such a Work as this, for laying down Rules without giving Examples; and I must own, it does not seem easy for me to excuse so great an Omission, when I might at once, with the Trouble only of Transcribing, have enlar-*



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vi      The PREFACE.

*ged the Book, adorned the Work, and diverted the courteous Reader.*

*But, perhaps, I had a Mind to be the first Modern that ever composed a Piece of this Nature without the Pomp of Quotations; and since I did not see the Necessity of it, I was willing to avoid all Ostentation of Learning. Tully is very sparing in Quotations. Most that he useth are to shew the Force and Varyings of Action and Elocution, rather than the Rules of Writing, except when he quotes himself, which is next to not quoting at all, and the worst*

The PREFACE. vii

worst *Way* of producing *Ex-amples* in the *World*. *Aristotle's Way* is dry and formal, and *Longinus*, who hath recorded some of the most beautiful *Passages* of the *Greek Authors* in his *Treatise* of *Sublime*, could not have been understood without them. I have dwell'd only on general *Rules*, without descending into the *Provinces* of the *Gram-marian* and *Rhetorician*, and perhaps if any *Body* is pleased to try, he will hardly find it practicable to illustrate these *Rules* by *Examples*.

The *Rules* I have given, are the *Result* of a *Thousand*

A 4      others,



viii    The PREFACE.

*others, the Abstract and Essence of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic; and the Examples of a perfect Style are to be taken from the best Authors in general, not from any separate Quotations. Tully and Quintilian do frequently commend the illustrious Writers they mention for their several Excellencies, and propose them as Standards in general for the several Ways of Writing they were distinguished in; but they never descend to Particulars, nor support their Opinions by formal Citations; for that they*  
refer

The PREFACE. ix

*refer themselves to every Man's Taste and Judgment.*

*If we consider others, who have delivered any Rules of Writing, we shall find, the Examples they produce, are in minuter Matters to explain the Terms and Signification of the lower Rules, which relate to Grammar and Rhetoric, to the Art and Mechanism of Writing. But where they treat in Generals, as I have done, they never illustrate their Rules by Examples. Quintilian's Institution is full of Quotations, for the first nine Books in which he treats his Subject as a Rhe-*

A 5      *torician,*

x      The PREFACE.

*torician, but in the three last, especially the twelfth, where he rises from Particulars to more general Considerations, we hardly have one Citation. The Examples he brings for Action and Pronunciation in the eleventh Book, are of another Kind, greatly differing from Authorities. And the same may be observed of Tully in his general Rules of Oratory. No body produces Examples of consistent Writers by particular Quotations, and the several Rules I have given for the Idiom, Purity, Plainness, and Decorations of Speech, &c. cannot be farther*

The PREFACE. xi

*ther illustrated by any Passages from Authors ; for we have natural Notions of these Things, and can only set them off by shewing the several Ways of offending against them.*

*Rules speak themselves ; they draw the Picture of Nature, and give us sure Criteria of an Original in every Performance. I am very certain, the World had seen the fairest Draughts before any settled Rules were given ; and perhaps the Works of the Learned have been more formal, but not more correct, since Men wrote according to*



xii      The PREFACE.

*Art.* For those who first prescribed the Rules of Writing, did not take Nature stripped and naked for their Copy, but they looked upon her as she was dressed and adorned by her Adorers: They took off indeed all false Colours, but allowed her a little Paint, and were content she should be set out like any Lady, provided her Dressers did not spoil her native Beauty. They formed their Rules upon the Model of the best Writers; they were so artful as to conceal their Art, and while they seemed to prescribe to others, they were only Copiers themselves.

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*selves. But after they had fixed the Standard, they were sure every Writer would be brought to their Bar; and as the first admirable Copies of Nature gave them a Foundation for their Rules, they knew every good Genius would write and judge by Nature, whether any Rules had been set or no. And perhaps, (for I love to doubt in Matters of so hazardous Conjecture) if the Rules had not been given, we had been troubled with many fewer Writers; for then those who had not Nature for their Rule, could have had no Rule at all. But now  
how*

xiv      The PREFACE.

*how many Scriblers are there who observe the Rule, and neglect the Meaning, and what Number of Pedants do we meet with, that keep to the Letter, and lose the Spirit?*

*I won't pretend to answer my Want of Method; perhaps I have observed it, though I seem to neglect it. Nor shall I need any Apology for the Style and Manner I have used, which the graver Critics will censure as too light and juvenile for one of my Profession. But I was not writing to my self, nor to the grave and learned, but to a  
young*

THE PREFACE. XV

young Nobleman of sprightly Parts, and a lively Imagination. My Business was to engage his Attention, and give the Piece such Colours, as would strike his Fancy. And I am very glad that while I wrote to a Youth, I could write something like a Youth, only tempering the Briskness of Thought with the Sedateness of Judgment.

What I wished might be performed by the finest Wits upon the ancient Authors, I have with inexpressible Pleasure seen accomplished by the admirable Critic upon Milton. And if Mr. Steel, and his Friends,



xvi      The PREFACE.

*Friends, would do the same Justice to Horace, Homer, and Virgil, or any celebrated Names in Antiquity, we might hope to read them in a brighter Light, and peruse Ten Thousand Glories, which lie covered under the modern Way of Illustration.*

Tully, who hath given us those excellent Books of Orators, and Oratory, was himself the greatest Orator. If Horace had not been an excellent Poet, he had never been an admirable Critic. The best Performers are the best Judges in every Art, and the ingenious Author of the  
Essay

The PREFACE. xvii

Essay upon Criticism, demonstrates the Justness of his Remarks, by the Goodness of his Writing. The true Spirit of Criticism seems to revive. My Lord Roscommon, and the present, with the late Duke of Bucks, opened the Scene in King Charles the Second's Time, but it soon closed again; and nothing was done but in a dry, formal Way, except by Dryden, who at once gave the best Rules, and broke them in spight of his own Knowledge, and the Rehearsal. His Prefaces are many of them admirable upon Dramatic Writing; he  
had

xviii The PREFACE.

*had some peculiar Notions, which he maintains with great Address; but his Judgment in disputed Points is of less Weight and Value, because the Inconstancy of his Temper did run into his Thoughts, and mixed with the Conduct of his Writings, as well as his Life.*

*The present Age seemeth to be born for carrying Criticism to its highest Pitch and Perfection. We have seen many admirable Pieces in the single Papers, which have been publish'd of late Years, preferable to Volumes of your stanch, formal Critics. Ma-*

*ny.*

The PREFACE. xix

*ny ingenious Hands have concurred to rescue it from Pedantry, Dulness, and Ill-nature. It is no longer a dry, sour, verbal Study, but claimeth a Place among the politest Parts of Learning. A Critic should lift up his Head with an easy, chearful Air, and not be distinguished, as the Tribe hath generally been, by the Wrinkles of his Brows, but as Men of Candor and Ingenuity ought to be, by the good Nature, Freedom, and Openness of his Countenance. Critics are apt to talk in a supercilious, magisterial Way, to obtrude their Sentiments on  
the*



xx      The PREFACE.

*the World, and maintain every singular Opinion with Stiffness and ill Manners. But if they would soften the Rigor of their Pen, and offer their Notions in a modest affable Address, their Civility and Complaisance would take off those Prejudices, with which Pride and Positiveness are generally entertained. The late Edition of Horace is the finest and greatest Piece of Criticism that was ever written on any Classic; and if the most learned Doctor had been a more popular Writer, the World I believe would have admired several Passages.*

The PREFACE. xxi

ges they endeavour to explode:  
And more Texts had been acknowledged admirably restored, if some had not been magisterially obtruded.

What a polite Critic may do if he pleases, and in how different an Aspect Criticism appears, when formed by Men of Parts and Fire, we may see in the three Volumes of Dr. Trapp's *Prælectiones Poeticæ*. A Work that cannot be enough commended, whether we consider the Curiousness of his Observations, the Justness of his Remarks, the Truth and Importance of his Rules, the Aptness and  
Beauty

xxii    The PREFACE.

*Beauty of his Examples, the Force and Elegance of his Style, and the Penetration of his Wit and Judgment: A Piece in such Perfection of Beauty, that he gives the Rules with the same Spirit we find in the Examples, and maketh those Dissertations, which in heavy, formal Hands, would have looked crabbed, dull, and dry, shine in all the Graces that Life, and Ease, and Vigour can adorn them with; we see how entertaining the severest Criticisms are in a Poet's Hand, and what Life and Spirit he can give to the dryest Part of his*

The PREFACE.   xxiii

*his Subject, while he prescribes the Rules and fixes the Laws of Poetic Diction, weigheth the Importance of Words, and considers the several Ways of Expression peculiar to the Poets. And if Men of such Learning, and such Parts, would undertake this Province, I cannot help repeating it, we should see more and more into the Propriety, Strength, and Compass, and all the hidden Beauties of the Greek and Latin Tongue.*

*What Advantages our Language may receive, when those will take upon them to reform it,*



xxiv    The PREFACE.

*it, who are the best Writers in it, we may partly conceive from the new Proposal for ascertaining the British Tongue, and fixing the Standard of it. And whenever a Work of that Public Spirit shall be undertaken, and supported by the greatest and ablest Hands in the Kingdom, I will promise myself to see our Language rival the Strength and Eloquence of the Roman Diction.*

*If I had seen my Lord Lansdowne's Poems in one View, I might have formed a juster Idea of the Greatness of his Genius, and the*  
Deli-

The PREFACE.    xxv

*Delicacy of his Wit. For when I wrote these Sheets, they lay dispersed up and down in the Miscellanies, but some kind Hand hath assembled the scattered Stars, and added another Lyre to the Constellations.*

Perhaps, the Characters I have drawn of our most celebrated Poets, Historians and Divines, will not be agreed in by all; and therefore, so various is the Judgment of Mankind, I suffer'd that Piece to go with some Reluctance. All I can say for my self is, that I have considered very carefully the Distinction of their Characters,

a                      and

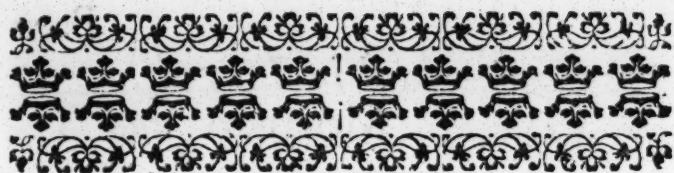
xxvi The PREFACE.

*and if I am not mistaken in that, I am sure I have said no more of them, than they deserve.*


*If I have advanced any singular Opinions, I shall be ready either to give them up, or give my Reasons for them; for, however I may differ in my Notions from the Herd of Critics and Commentators, I shall always be ambitious to think with the politer, and more candid part of Mankind. And agreeably to this Declaration, I have acted in this Edition.*

*The Additions must answer for themselves, for I don't care to enlarge this Preface any more.*

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b

Adver-



## Advertisement.

**I** Did not think it necessary to trouble the World with any Reasons why I sent these Sheets abroad, so long after they had been written, and especially as they were publish'd in the first Edition with the Characters of many Divines then living; but I find my self oblig'd to give some Account of the Matter now, since I have been charg'd with leaving some Characters out of the last Edition, from Partiality or Dislike to their Persons.

If I could ever act upon such base and mean Principles, or had any Dislike to any Person whatever,  
I had

## ADVERTISEMENT.

I had never mention'd him at first. The Truth is, in the Year 1713. I was oblig'd to publish the Book, as it was, to prevent its Publication from a surreptitious Copy, otherwise I should not have publish'd it at all; but finding that my inserting the Characters of several, was objected too, I left them out in the Second Edition, with a Purpose to restore them as they died; and the Third Edition being publish'd without my Knowledge, I have not had any Opportunity of replacing them till *now*; and I hope their Friends will not think it any Injury to their Names or Memories.

These Sheets were first compos'd out of a sincere Zeal for the Service of that Noble Lord and Family to whom they are address'd, and by those honest Endeavours in some Measure to deserve their Favour.

This



## ADVERTISEMENT.

This and whatever else I have attempted, for the Honour of that Illustrious House, I do now consecrate, as a Monument of Gratitude for the Favours I have receiv'd. And may I ever possess a modest Temper, and a thankful Mind, too generous to solicit, and too just to be ungrateful.



A DISSER-



A  
DISSERTATION

On Reading the  
CLASSICS, &c.

MY LORD,



CAN hardly prevail  
with my self to give  
Your Lordship this  
Trouble, without ma-  
king an Apology for it  
in the Entrance, and begging  
Your Lordship's Pardon for intru-  
ding without Leave, and offering  
You a Present before I am sure of  
B Your

Your Acceptance. I might be very large upon the Importance and Advantages of Education, and say a great many Things which have been said before ; but that Point is so well considered by Your Lordship's most noble Parents, that I need not say any thing upon it; and Your Lordship's Application to the excellent Methods taken for making a great and a good Man, will answer, I am persuaded, all the fair Expectations every body conceiveth of You, that knoweth You.

And therefore, as you want no Instructions suitable to your Birth and Quality, I have rather chosen to present Your Lordship with some peculiar Thoughts, than to run a needless Treatise upon the Subject at length; and though what I say is no doubt inculcated to Your Lordship by better Hands,

2  
yet

yet Variety may engage Your Attention, and the same Precepts differently applied, will make the deeper Impression, where Your Mind hath received the Characters before, and is readier to admit a second Stamp, when it is so well prepared by the first.

Your Lordship will at least have the Advantage of seeing Things together, and Leisure to weigh and consider the Reasonableness of what is recommended to You: And if I offer any thing which is not commonly observed, I hope it will not be interpreted any Singularity, but such as may render Your Lordship more eminent and distinguished in the World.

The great Obligations I have to those of Your illustrious Family, incline me to make some Acknowledgment; and since I am not capable of doing it to them, I have



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chosen this Way to give Your Lordship a Token of the great Honour I have for the House of RUTLAND; and if I am of any Service to Your Lordship, I shall gratify a particular Inclination of my own to serve You.

Your Lordship's Years begin to make You capable of Reflection, and Your good Parts, advancing far before Your Years, discover a solid Judgment joined with a quick Apprehension, which, if duly improved, will teach You to think right, and bring You to so just a Conclusion in all Emergencies, that to apprehend and determine will be but one Trouble; so vast an Advantage is a natural Penetration in an Understanding like Yours, when it comes to be exercised in Knowledge, and acquainted with the World.

I have observed, besides the Readiness of Parts, a Goodness of Nature, an excellent Disposition of Mind derived to Your Lordship from the Parents of two Generations to whom I have the Honour to be known; and those excellent Seeds implanted in Your Birth will, if cultivated, be most flourishing in Production; and as the Soil is good, and no Cost nor Care wanting to improve it, we must entertain Hopes of the richest Harvest: The Ear must be admirable and full, when the Blade is so fair and promising.

Your Birth is attended with peculiar Advantages of Title and Estate, of Worth and Goodness in Your Ancestors and Parents: The Honour and Dignity of Your Family, the great Examples of Virtue in Your Progenitors for a long Descent, and the living and more



6      *Necessity of Education.*

prevailing Example of Your most illustrious Grandfather and Father, will fire a Soul like Yours to a generous Emulation ; and, I hope, Your Lordship will *follow them with equal Steps, if You do not go beyond them.*

So select a Conjunction of the happiest Circumstances must have a blessed Influence on the whole Course of Your Life ; and if Families are the more noble for being more ancient, Your Lordship will shine in true Nobility, and reflect a Lustre on all the long *Gallery* of Your Predecessors.

But, my Lord, the fairest Diamonds are rough till they are polished, and the purest Gold must be run and washed, and sifted in the Ore. We are untaught by Nature, and the finest Qualities will grow wild and degenerate, if the Mind is not formed by Discipline,

*Necessity of Education.* 7

pline, and cultivated with an early Care. In some Persons, who have run up to Men without a liberal Education, we may observe many great Qualities darken'd and eclipsed; their Minds are crufted over like Diamonds in the Rock; they flash out sometimes into an irregular Greatness of Thought, and betray in their Actions an unguided Force, and unmanaged Virtue: Something very great and very noble may be discerned; but it looketh cumbersome and awkward, and is, alone of all Things, the worse for being natural. Nature is undoubtedly the best Mistress, and the aptest Scholar; but Nature herself must be civilized, or she will look savage, as she appears in the *Indian* Princes, who are vested with a native Majesty, a surprising Greatness and Generosity of Soul, and discover what we always

8      *Necessity of Education.*

regret, fine Parts, and excellent natural Endowments, without Improvement. In those Countries which we call *barbarous*, where Art and Politeness are not understood, Nature hath the greater Advantage in this, that Simplicity of Manners often secureth the Innocence of the Mind; and as Virtue is not, so neither is Vice civilized and refined: But in these *politer* Parts of the World, where Virtue excelleth by Rules and Discipline, Vice also is more instructed, and with us good Qualities will not spring up alone: Many hurtful Weeds will rise with them, and choak them in their Growth, unless removed by some skilful Hand; nor will the Mind be brought to a just Perfection, without cherishing every hopeful Seed, and repressing every superfluous Humour: The Mind is like the Body in this Regard,

gard, which cannot fall into a decent and easy Carriage, unless it be fashioned in Time: An untaught Behaviour, like the People that use it, is truly rustick, forced, and uncouth, and Art must be applied to make it natural.

My Lord, the Necessity of Education is plain, but the Methods of it are in many Points ungrateful to Persons of Your Lordship's Years. Sprightly Youth, and close Application, will hardly stand together: Long Attention to the same Thing is tedious to tender Minds, and 'tis difficult to fix the *Mercury*, and settle a brisk, lively Temper, in a laborious plodding Track of Learning. This Your Lordship's Parts are too delicate to admit of, and too ready to need: You will always use Application enough to apprehend Things fully; and a shorter Attention, if it be close, will mas-



ter any Difficulty that falls in Your way. I believe Your Lordship is of that generous Temper, so natural to Persons of Your great Parts, to suffer no Difficulty to be too hard for You, and to master every Opposition that would obstruct Your Passage.

For, my Lord, 'tis in Knowledge as in War; open Places are easily taken in, and Towns not strongly fortified make but a weak Resistance; but where Art and Nature conspire to render any Fortress impregnable, it must be won by the most powerful Assaults, and noblest Resolution. *Brussels* and *Louvain* are easy Conquests, they do not so much resist, as admit the Victor; but if the Duke of *Marlborough*, or Prince *Eugene*, had expected other Towns would have made them the same Compliments, *Lisle* had still remained to the  
*French,*

*The Difficulties.*

II

*French*, and *Mons* and *Tournay* might still have been thought impregnable. 'Tis familiar to our Troops to beat an Army in plain Fight, and open Field; but when the Enemy lieth entrenched behind Lines, as strong as Walls, the late bloody and glorious Battle at the Woods of *Sart* and *Sansart* will shew, that the last Degrees of Bravery and Resolution, the most absolute Points of Courage and Conduct are required to surmount such insuperable Difficulties, and return with Victory.

To leave this Digression, my Lord, if I may call it so, Knowledge will not be won without Pains and Application: Some Parts of it are easier, some more difficult of Access: We must proceed at once by Sap and Battery, and when the Breach is practicable, Your Lordship hath nothing to do, but

to

12 *The Way to Knowledge.*

to press boldly on, and enter: It is troublesome and deep digging for pure Waters, but when once you come to the Spring, they rise and meet you. The Entrance into Knowledge is oftentimes very narrow, dark, and tiresome; but the Rooms are spacious, and gloriously furnished: The Countrey is admirable, and every Prospect entertaining. Your Lordship need not wonder, that fine Countries have strait Avenues, when the Regions of Happiness, like those of Knowledge, are impervious, and shut to lazy Travellers, and the Way to Heaven it self is narrow.

Common Things are easily attained, and no body valueth what lieth in every body's way: What is excellent, is placed out of ordinary Reach, and Your Lordship will easily be persuaded to put forth Your Hand to the utmost Stretch,  
and

and reach whatever You aspire at.

Many are the Subjects, my Lord, which will invite and deserve the steddiest Application from those who would excel, and be distinguished in them: Human Learning in general, Natural Philosophy, Mathematicks, and the whole Circle of Science: But there is no Necessity of leading You through these several Fields of Knowledge: It will be most commendable to gather some of the fairest Fruit from them all, and to lay up a Store of good Sense, and sound Reason, of great Probity, and solid Virtue. This is the true Use of Knowledge, to make it subservient to the great Duties of our most holy Religion, that as You are daily grounded in the true and saving Knowledge of a Christian, you may use the Helps of humane Learning,



#### 14 *Use of Humane Learning.*

Learning, and direct them to their proper End. Your Lordship will meet with great and wonderful Examples of an irregular and mistaken Virtue in the *Greeks* and *Romans*, with many Instances of Greatness of Mind, of unshaken Fidelity, Contempt of humane Grandeur, a most passionate Love of their Countrey, Prodigality of Life, Disdain of Servitude, inviolable Truth, and the most public disinterested Souls that ever threw off all Regards in comparison with their Countrey's Good; Your Lordship will discern the Flaws and Blemishes of their fairest Actions, see the wrong Apprehensions they had of Virtue, and be able to point them right, and keep them within their proper Bounds. Under this Correction Your Lordship may extract a generous and noble Spirit from the Writings and Histories  
of

*Use of Humane Learning.* 15  
of the Ancients. And I would in  
a particular Manner recommend  
the *Classic Authors* to Your Favour,  
and they will recommend themselves  
to Your Approbation.

If Your Lordship would resolve  
to master the *Greek* as well as the  
*Latin* Tongue, You will find that  
the one is the Source and Original  
of all that is most excellent in the  
other; I do not mean so much  
for Expression, as Thought, though  
some of the most beautiful Strokes  
of the *Latin* Tongue are drawn  
from the Lines of the *Grecian* Ora-  
tors and Poets; but for Thought,  
and Fancy, for the very Founda-  
tion and Embellishment of their  
Works, You will see, the *Latins*  
have ransacked the *Grecian* Store,  
and, as *Horace* advises all who  
would succeed in writing well, had  
their Authors Night and Morning  
in their Hands.

And

16 *Classics recommended and compar'd.*

And they have been such happy Imitators, that the Copies have proved more exact than the Originals; and *Rome* hath triumphed over *Athens*, as well in Wit, as Arms; for though *Greece* may have the Honour of Invention, yet 'tis easier to strike out a new Course of Thought, than to equal old Originals; and therefore it is more Honour to surpass, than to invent a-new. *Verrio* is a great Man from his own Designs; but if he had attempted upon the *Cartons*, and out-done *Raphael Urbin* in Life and Colours, he had been acknowledged greater than that celebrated Master, but now we must think him less.

If I may detain Your Lordship with a short Comparison of the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors, I must needs own, the last have the Preference in my Thoughts, and I am  
not

*Classics recommended and compar'd.* 17  
not singular in my Opinion. It must be confessed, the *Romans* have left no Tragedies behind them, that may compare with the Majesty of the *Grecian* Stage; the best Comedies of *Rome* were written on the *Grecian* Plan, but *Menander* is too far lost to be compared with *Terence*; only if we may judge by the Method *Terence* used in forming two *Greek* Plays into one, we shall naturally conclude, since his are perfect upon that Model, that they are more perfect than *Menander's* were. I shall make no great Difficulty in preferring *Plautus* to *Aristophanes*, for Wit and Humour, Variety of Characters, Plot and Contrivance in his Plays; and though *Horace* hath censured him for low Wit, yet what *Quintilian* speaks of him from *Varro*, is more than a Balance on his Side.

*Virgil*



*Virgil* has been so often compared with *Homer*, and the Merits of those Poets so often canvassed, that I shall only say, that if the *Roman* shines not in the *Grecian's* Flame and Fire, 'tis the Coolness of his Judgment, rather than the Want of Heat. Your Lordship will generally find the Force of a Poet's Genius, and the Strength of his Fancy, display themselves in the Descriptions they give of Battles, Storms, Prodigies, &c. and *Homer's* Fire breaks out on these Occasions, in more Dread and Terror: But *Virgil* mixes Compassion with his Terror, and by throwing Water on the Flame, maketh it burn the brighter; so in the Storm; so in his Battles on the Fall of *Pallas* and *Camilla*: And that Scene of Horror, which his Hero opens in the second Book, the Burning of *Troy*, the Ghost of *Hector*, the Murder

Greek and Roman Writers. 19

Murder of the King, the Massacre of the People, the sudden Surprise, and the Dead of Night, are so reliev'd by the Piety and Pity that is every where intermix'd, that we forget our Fears, and join in the Lamentation. All the World acknowledgeth the *Æneid* to be most perfect in its Kind; and considering the Disadvantage of the Language, and the *Severity* of the *Roman Muse*, the Poem is still more wonderful, since without the Liberty of the *Grecian Poets*, the Diction is so great and noble, so clear, so forcible and expressive, so chaste and pure, that even all the Strength and Compass of the *Greek Tongue* joined to *Homer's Fire*, cannot give us stronger and clearer Ideas than the great *Virgil* hath set before our Eyes, some few Instances excepted, in which *Homer*,  
through

through the Force of Genius, hath excelled.

I have argued hitherto, my Lord, for *Virgil*, and it will be no Wonder that his Poem should be more correct in the Rules of Writing, if that strange Opinion prevaiileth, that *Homer* writ without any View or Design at all, that his Poems are loose, independent Pieces tacked together, and were originally only so many *Songs* or *Ballads* upon the *Gods* and *Heroes*, and the *Siege* of *Troy*. If this be true, they are the compleatest String of Ballads I ever met with; and whoever collected them, and put them in the Method we now read them in, whether it were *Pisistratus*, or any other, hath placed them in such Order, that the *Iliad* and the *Odysseys* seem to have been composed with one View and Design, one Scheme

Scheme and Intention, which are carried on from the Beginning to the End all along uniform and consistent with themselves. Some, my Lord, have argued the World was made by a wise Being, and not jumbled together by Chance, from the very Absurdity of such a Supposition; and they have illustrated their Argument from the Impossibility that such a Poem as *Homer's*, and *Virgil's*, should rise in such beautiful Order out of Millions of Letters eternally shaken together; but this Argument is half spoiled, if we allow that the Poems of *Homer*, in each of which appeareth one continued formed Design from one End to the other, were written in loose Scraps on no settled premeditated Scheme. *Horace*, we are sure, was of another Opinion, and so was *Virgil* too, who built his *Aeneid* upon the Model of the  
*Iliad*,



22      *A Comparison of the*

*Iliad*, and the *Odyſſeis*; after all, *Tully*, whoſe Relation of this Paſſage hath given ſome Colour to this Suggestion, ſayeth no more than that *Piſiſtratus*, whom he commendeth for his Learning, and condemneth for his Tyranny, obſerving the Books of *Homer* to lie confuſed and out of Order, placed them in the Method the great Author, no doubt, had firſt formed them in: But all this *Tully* giveth us only as Report. And it would be very ſtrange, that *Ariſtotle* ſhould form his Rules on *Homer's* Poems; that *Horace* ſhould follow his Example, and propoſe *Homer* for the Standard of *Epic* Writing, with this bright Teſtimony, that he *never undertook any thing inconfiderately, nor ever made any fooliſh Attempts*; if indeed this celebrated Poet did not intend to form his Poems in the Order and Deſign we ſee them in. If we look  
upon

upon the Fabrick and Construction of those great Works, we shall find an admirable Proportion in all the Parts, a perpetual Coincidence and Dependance of one upon another; I will venture an Appeal to any learned Critic in this Cause, and if it be a sufficient Reason to alter the common Readings in a Letter, a Word, or a Phrase, from the Consideration of the Context, or Propriety of the Language, and call it the restoring of the Text, is it not a Demonstration that these Poems were made in the same Course of Lines, and upon the same Plan we read them in at present, from all the Arguments, that Connection, Dependance and Regularity can give us? If those Critics who maintain this odd Fancy of *Homer's* Writings, had found them loose, and undigested, and restored them to the Order they stand in now, I believe

believe they would have gloried in their Art, and maintained it with more uncontested Reasons, than they are able to bring for the Discovery of a Word, or a Syllable hitherto falsly printed in the Text of any Author. But, my Lord, if any learned Men of singular Fancies and Opinions, will not allow these Buildings to have been originally designed after the present Model, let them at least allow us one poetical Supposition on our Side, that *Homer's* Harp was as powerful to command his scattered incoherent Pieces into the beautiful Structure of a Poem, as *Amphion's* was to summon the Stones into a Wall, or *Orpheus's* to lead the Trees a Dance. For certainly, however it happeneth, the Parts are so justly disposed, that you cannot change any Book into the Place of another, without spoiling the Proportion,

tion, and confounding the Order of the whole.

The *Georgicks* are above all Controversy with *Hesiod* ; but the *Idylliums* of *Theocritus* have something so inimitably sweet in the Verse and Thoughts, such a native Simplicity, and are so genuine, so natural a Result of the rural Life, that I must, in my poor Judgment, allow him the Honour of the *Pastoral*.

In *Lyricks* the *Grecians* may seem to have excelled, as undoubtedly they are superior in the Number of their Poets, and Variety of their Verse: But most of them are almost entirely lost: Here and there a Fragment of some of them is remaining, which, like some broken Parts of ancient Statues, preserve an imperfect Monument of the Delicacy, Strength, and Skill of the great Master's Hand.

C

*Pindar*



*Pindar* is sublime, but obscure, impetuous in his Course, and unfathomable in the Depth and Loftiness of his Thoughts. *Anacreon* floweth soft and easy, every where diffusing the Joy and Indolence of his Mind through his Verse, and tuning his Harp to the smooth and pleasant Temper of his Soul. *Horace* alone may be compared to both, in whom are reconciled the Loftiness and Majesty of *Pindar*, and the gay, careless, jovial Temper of *Anacreon*. And, I suppose, however *Pindar* may be admired for Greatness, and *Anacreon* for Delicateness of Thought; *Horace*, who rivals one in his Triumphs, and the other in his Mirth and Love, surpasseth them both in Justness, Elegance, and Happiness of Expression. *Anacreon* hath another Follower among the choicest Wits of Rome, and that is *Catullus*, whom,

Greek and Roman *Writers.* 27

whom, though his Lines be rough, and his Numbers inharmonious, I could recommend for the Softness and Delicacy, but must decline for the Looseness of his Thoughts, too immodest for chaste Ears to bear.

I will go no farther in the Poets, only for the Honour of our Countrey, let me observe to Your Lordship, that while *Rome* hath been contented to produce some single Rivals to the *Grecian* Poetry, *England* hath brought forth the wonderful *Cowley's* Wit, who was beloved by every Muse he courted, and hath rivall'd the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets in every Kind, but Tragedy.

I will not trouble Your Lordship with the Historians any farther, than to inform you, that the Contest lieth chiefly between *Thucydides*, and *Sallust*, *Herodotus* and *Li-*

vy, though I think *Thucydides* and *Livy* may on many Accounts more justly be compared. The Critics have been very free in their Censures, but I shall be glad to suspend any farther Judgment, till your Lordship shall be able to read them, and give me your Opinion.

Oratory and Philosophy are the next disputed Prizes; and whatever Praises may be justly given to *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Xenophon* and *Demosthenes*, I will venture to say, that the divine *Tully* is all the *Grecian* Orators and Philosophers in one.

And now, my Lord, having possibly given you some Prejudice in favour of the *Romans*, I must beg Leave to assure you, that if you have not Leisure to master both, you will find your Pains well rewarded in the *Latin* Tongue, when once you enter into the Elegancies  
and

and Beauties of it. 'Tis the peculiar Felicity of that Language, to speak good Sense in suitable Expressions: To give the finest Thoughts in the happiest Words, and in an easy Majesty of Style, to write up to the Subject. " And  
" in this, my Lord, lieth the great  
" Secret of Writing well. It is  
" that elegant Simplicity, that ornamental Plainness of Speech,  
" which every common Genius  
" thinketh so plain, that any Body  
" may reach it, and findeth so very  
" elegant, that all his Sweat and  
" Pains, and Study, fail him in the  
" Attempt."

In reading the excellent Authors of the *Roman* Tongue, whether you converse with *Poets*, *Orators*, or *Historians*, your Lordship will meet with all that is admirable in humane Composure: And though Life, and Spirit, Propriety, and



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Force of Style, be common to them all, you will see, that nevertheless every Writer shineth in his peculiar Excellencies, and that Wit, like Beauty, is diversified into a Thousand Graces of Feature and Complexion.

I need not trouble your Lordship with a particular Character of these celebrated Writers; what I have said already, and what I shall say farther of them as I go along, render it less necessary at present; and I would not pre-engage your Opinion implicitly to my Side. It will be a pleasant Exercise of your Judgment to distinguish them yourself; and when your Lordship and I shall be able to depart from the common received Opinions of the Critics and Commentators, I may take some other Occasion of laying them before your Lordship, and submitting what I shall then say of them.

them to your Lordship's Approbation.

In the mean time, I shall only give your Lordship two or three Cautions, and Directions for your reading them, which to some People will look a little odd, but with me they are of great Moment, and very necessary to be observ'd.

The first is, that your Lordship would never be persuaded into what they call *Common-Places*, which is a Way of taking an Author to Pieces, and ranging him under proper Heads, that you may readily find what he hath said upon any Point, by consulting an *Alphabet*. This Practice is of no Use but in Circumstantials of Time and Place, Custom and Antiquity, and in such Instances where Facts are to be remember'd, not where the Brain is to be exercised. In these Cases



it is of great Use: It helpeth the Memory, and serveth to keep those Things in a sort of Order and Succession. But, my Lord, *Common-Placing* the *Sense* of an Author, is such a stupid Undertaking, that, if I may be indulged in saying it, they *want common Sense* that practise it. What Heaps of this Rubbish have I seen! O the Pains and Labour to record what other People have said, that is taken by those, who have nothing to say themselves! your Lordship may depend upon it, the Writings of these Men are never worth the Reading; the Fancy is cramp'd, the Invention spoiled, their Thoughts on every thing are prevented, if they think at all; but 'tis the peculiar Happiness of these *Collectors* of Sense, that they can write without *Thinking*.

I do most readily agree, that all the bright sparkling Thoughts of  
the

the *Ancients*, their finest Expressions, and noblest Sentiments, are to be met with in these *Transcribers*: But how wretchedly are they brought in, how miserably put together! Indeed, my Lord, I can compare such Productions to nothing but rich Pieces of Patchwork, sewed together with Packthread.

When I see a beautiful Building of exact Order and Proportion, taken down, and the different Materials laid together by themselves, it putteth me in mind of these *Common-Place Men*. The Materials are certainly very good, but they understand not the Rules of Architecture so well, as to form them into just and masterly Proportions any more: And yet how beautiful would they stand in another Model upon another Plan!

For, my Lord, we must confess the Truth; we can say nothing new, at least we can say nothing better, than hath been said before; but we may nevertheless make what we say our *Own*. And this is done, when we do not trouble ourselves to remember in what Page, or what Book we have read such a Passage; but it falleth in naturally with the Course of our own Thoughts, and taketh its Place in our Writings with as much Ease, and looketh with as good a Grace, as it appeared in two Thousand years ago.

This, my Lord, is the best Way of remembring the *Ancient* Authors, when you *relish* their Way of Writing, enter into their *Thoughts*, and *imbibe* their *Sense*. There is no need of tying ourselves up to an Imitation of any of them, much less to copy, or transcribe them. For there is Room for vast Variety  
of

of Thought and Style, as Nature is various in her Works, and is Nature still. Good Authors, like the celebrated *Masters* in the several *Schools of Painting*, are *Originals* in their *Way*, and *different* in their *Manner*. And when we can make the same Use of the *Romans*, as they did of the *Grecians*, and habituate ourselves to their *Way of Thinking and Writing*, we may be equal in Rank, though different from them all, and be esteemed *Originals* as well as they.

And this is what I would have your Lordship do: Mix and incorporate with those ancient Streams; and though your own Wit will be improved, and heightened by such a strong Infusion; yet the Spirit, the Thought, the Fancy, the Expression which shall flow from your Pen, will be entirely your Own.



The next Direction I would give your Lordship is, that you would *decline* the *Critical* Part of Learning as much as possible, for that will lead you insensibly from good Sense, and good Language; and 'tis below a Person of your Lordship's Parts and Quality to take Notice of it. I am not ignorant of its admirable Use in the World of Learning, nor would I betray your Lordship into any Contempt of an Art, where a Man must be a great Man indeed to excel, as some amongst us most eminently do: But, my Lord, I would warn you against the Infection of the less and lower Critics, who are capable of nothing but collating Manuscripts, and are not able to ascertain the Text, or bring you nearer to the Original; this is the Case of your common Editors, but 'tis one Comfort, that we need not be too solicitous about

bout the Words of an Author, to have a right Taste of him; your Lordship will always use the best and most correct Editions, and various Readings will be only troublesome, where the Sense and Language are compleat without them.

My Lord, I am always an Advocate for young Gentlemen in the Business of their Studies: It is certainly a great Mistake to make it difficult and laborious, to vex and torture the Minds of Youth with dry, insipid, grave, and perplexing Trifles. Study will be recommended to young Heads with better Success, from the Easiness and Pleasure of the Practice, than from the Usefulness and Importance of the Subject; and all Ways should be invented to make the learning Part delightful and engaging.

Learning is dressed to a great Disadvantage by Critics and Grammarians;

marians; like a beautiful Lady ill-painted, she maketh a frightful Figure: And then she is cloyster'd up, my Lord, like a Fairy Princess in an enchanted Castle, encompassed with Moats and Walls, and guarded by *Paynim* Knights, monstrous Giants, and burning Dragons. But, my Lord, if a Man hath but Wit and Courage enough not to be daunted at these grim Appearances, the Charm is dissolved, the Bugbears vanish, and the Way is open.

It hath been a long Complaint in this polite and excellent Age of Learning, that we lose our Time in Words, that the Memory of Youth is charged and over-loaded, without Improvement, and all they learn is meer Cant and Jargon for three or four years together. Now, my Lord, the Complaint is in some Measure true, but not easily remedied; and perhaps, after all the  
Excla-

Exclamation of so much Time lost in meer Words and Terms, the hopeful Youths, whose Loss of Time is so much lamented, were capable of learning nothing but Words at those Years: I do not mind what some Quacks in the Art of Teaching say; they pretend to work Wonders, and to make young Gentlemen Masters of the Languages, before they can be Masters of common Sense; but this to me, my Lord, is a Demonstration that we are capable of little else than Words, till twelve or thirteen, if your Lordship will observe, that a Lad shall be able to repeat his Grammar over, two or three Years before his Understanding opens enough to let him into the Reason and clear Apprehension of the Rules; and when this is done, sooner or later, it ceaseth to be Cant and Jargon; so that all this Clamour is wrong founded,  
and



and the Cause of Complaint lies rather against the Backwardness of our Judgment, than the Method of our Schools: And therefore I am for the old Way in Schools still, and Children will be furnished there with a Stock of Words at least, when they come to know how to use them.

But, my Lord, Persons of your Lordship's Condition may be permitted to go out of the common Road, and try to learn Things and Words together: I am of Opinion, that Language may be attained by the Reverse of the Method that is generally taken, and a Youth taught to know Grammar by Books, instead of Books by Grammar. This was Mr. *Cowley's* Case, and in some Measure I may say it was my own at the same School, but it is by no means generally practicable. However, there is no Necessity, where  
we

we are not tied up by the Course and Discipline, which must, if possible, be maintained in Schools, if we be not obliged by those Methods, there is no Necessity of burthening the Memory with an exact Repetition of the Rules: 'Tis enough from the Authors which are read, to learn the Use, and Application of them: And if, after this, a clear Explication of the Meaning were joined to the bare grammatical Construction, young Scholars would be able to understand what they read, and be pleased to find that their Authors are made up of something besides the Eight Parts of Speech. Such a Method would indeed require more Pains in the Teacher, but those would be well rewarded by the Progress and Satisfaction of the Scholar.

Your Lordship is beyond these Rules, and will judge of the Reasonableness

42 *Complaint against Commentators.*

sonableness of them with respect to others, who are just entering on the Stage of Learning. I only give your Lordship my Thoughts: I do not pretend to dictate.

Your Lordship will therefore give me Leave to consider another Complaint against the present Method of Learning, taken from the Multitude of Notes and Comments, which crowd the Authors, and perplex the Reader. I must own, I have not that Respect for the *Company* of *Annotators*, which they generally meet with in the World. Some, indeed, must be excepted; but Youths are not capable of using the best, and the worst are not worth regarding: For which Reason the celebrated Dr. *BUSBY* strictly forbid the Use of Notes, and for our *Greek* and *Latin* Authors, we had nothing but the plain Text in a correct and chaste Edition.

*Complaint against Commentators.* 43

tion. Under such a Master, they could do no Good, there was no need of the best; and the others might do a great deal of Hurt, by infecting the Children at once with their own Blunders and Dulness.

Excepting those of some very learned Men, Comments are generally an Art of making Authors difficult, under a Pretence of explaining them. And it hath been the hard Fortune of the best Writers to be perplexed with Notes, and obscured by Illustrations. The Abilities of the Teacher will best supply the Defects of the Commentator, and it will be a Pleasure to young Gentlemen, as he leads them along, to see from him the *Geography, Antiquities, Customs and History* of the Ancients. The *Poetical Story* is generally known, because diverting to be read; especially those that are acquainted with  
the



44 *Complaint against Commentators.*

the *Metamorphoses* and *Apollodorus*, can be no Strangers to it; and all these together, are the Foundation and Reason of all those Heaps of *Comments*, which are piled so high upon Authors, that it is difficult sometimes to clear the Text from the Rubbish, and draw it out of the Ruins.

If there is any thing else Commentators concern themselves about, it is Propriety of Expression, or rather some verbal Niceties, and grammatical Scruples; for they have seldom Parts enough to discover the true Graces of their Authors; and those Words, which in their natural Situation shine like Jewels enchased in Gold, look, when transposed into their Notes, as if they were set in Lead, and adorned with that resplendent Metal.

Setting

*Complaint against Commentators.* 45

Setting these *grave Gentlemen* aside, I have often wished, my Lord, that some of the finest Wits would undertake the finest Writers in the World, and give us a Comment upon them, to display the Life and Beauty of their Authors: It requireth a Genius like that wherewith they writ, to write upon them: Every Man that understandeth *Latin*, doth not understand either Greatness or Delicacy of Thought, Strength, or Beauty of Expression; and some critical Heads, such absolute Masters are they of their Passions, can bear the Raptures and Flights of Poets with a wonderful Command of Temper, and be no more affected with the most moving Strains, than if they were reading the heaviest Piece of their own composing. They have no Notion of Life and Fire in Fancy and in Words, and any thing that  
is

is just in Grammar and in Measure, provided always the Words be placed according to Art, is as good O-ratory and Poetry to them, as the best. 'Tis no Wonder, then, their Comments make the most sprightly Authors phlegmatic and dull, and that to read them with their bright Observations, is like reading *Homer* in a prose Translation.

“ The great Art of Teaching,  
“ my Lord, is to give the Learn-  
“ ers a true Taste of their Au-  
“ thors, to open the Beauties of  
“ their Thoughts and Style, to  
“ shew them the bright Parts, the  
“ peculiar Excellencies, the Force  
“ and Spirit, the Ease and Gentle-  
“ ness of their Writings: How all  
“ is uncommon, and all is natural,  
“ and every thing so thought and  
“ said, that upon the Occasion it is  
“ impossible to deliver better  
“ Thoughts in better Words.”

But

*Not the Talent of Critics, &c.* 47

But this, my Lord, is not the Talent of Critics and Grammarians: They can give, indeed, the Rules of *Syntax* and of *Rhetoric*, and make a Shift to exemplify them in a wretched Composition, by bringing in every odd Exception in Grammar, every Figure and Scheme of Speech, Head and Shoulders, by main Force, in spite of Nature and their Subject. For be the Subject what it will, the Style and the Decorations are the same; so that their Discourse having no Coherence, but the coupling Particles, looketh like a perfect Skeleton tacked together with Wires, staring, hollow, stiff, and horrid, stripped of Sense, without Nerves and Sinews, Life and Motion.

I will trouble your Lordship no longer upon this Subject; and if I have said any thing to secure you against the Impressions of this poor  
Sort



Sort of Learning, I only intended a necessary Caution; and if ever these Sheets become more publick, I hope no truly learned Man will be offended; I am sure I am very far from having any mean Thoughts of those great Men who preside in our chiefest and most celebrated Schools; it is my Happiness to be known to the most eminent of them in a particular Manner, and they will acquit me of any Disrespect, where they know I have the greatest Veneration; for with them the Genius of Classic Learning dwelleth, and from them it is derived: And I think my self honoured in the Acquaintance of some Masters in the Countrey, who are not less polite, than they are learned, and to the exact Knowledge of the *Greek* and *Roman* Tongues have joined a true Taste, and delicate Relish, of the Classic Authors.

But

But should your Lordship ever light into some formal Hands, though your Sense is too fine to relish those Pedantries I have been remonstrating against, when you come to understand them, yet for the present they may impose upon you with a grave Appearance; and, as Learning is commonly managed by such Persons, you may think them very *Learned*, because they are very *Dull*. And if you should receive the Tincture while you are young, it may sink too deep for all the Waters of *Helicon* to take out. You may be sensible of it as we are of ill Habits, which we regret, but cannot break, and so it may mix with your Studies for ever, and give bad Colours to every thing you design, whether in Speech or Writing.

For, my Lord, these meaner Critics dress up their Entertainments

D

so

50      *Concerning a just Style.*

so very ill, that they will spoil your Palate, and bring you to a vicious Taste. With them, as with dis-tempered Stomachs, the finest Food and noblest Juices, turn to nothing but Crudities and Indigestion. You will have no Notion of Delicacies, if you table with them; they are all for rank and foul Feeding, and spoil the best Provisions in the Cooking: You must be content to be taught Parsimony in Sense, and for your most inoffensive Food, to live upon dry Meat and insipid Stuff, without any Poignancy or Relish.

So then, my Lord, these Gentlemen will never be able to form your Taste or your Style; and those who cannot give you a true Relish of the best Writers in the World, can never instruct you to write like them.

Give

*Concerning a just Style.* 51

Give me Leave, my Lord, to touch this Subject, and draw out for your Lordship's Use, some of the chief Strokes, some of the principal Lineaments, and fairest Features of a just and beautiful Style. There is no Necessity of being methodical, and I will not entertain your Lordship with a dry System upon the Matter, but with what you will read with more Pleasure, and I hope, with equal Profit, some desultory Thoughts in their native Order, as they rise in my Mind, without being reduced to Rules, and marshalled according to Art.

I am ambitious, my Lord, to see you Master of a fine Pen; you have so many Advantages to command it, that you may easily excel: For as you have laid the necessary Foundation, if you raise upon it the beautiful Structure of Classic Learning,



Learning, it is impossible your Lordship should not stand upon the highest Eminence, and hold the first Rank with those who are distinguished for the Beauties of their Style. For beside the common Accomplishment of Classic Learning, Persons of your Lordship's Quality have so fine a Turn, so genteel an Air, from their Breeding, and courtly Conversation, in every Thing they write or speak, that it giveth an inimitable Grace to their Words and Compositions; and I never knew a Nobleman equal in Learning to other Men, but he was superior to them in the Delicacy and Civility of his Style.

*Cæsar*, my Lord, writ like a Man of Quality; and among innumerable Excellencies, which he holdeth in common with other Authors, he possesseth this almost peculiar to himself, that you see the

*Prince*

*Prince* and the *Gentleman*, as well as the *Scholar* and the *Soldier*, in his *Memoirs*. *Ovid* was all over a Man of Breeding, and perhaps if I may be allowed to make a Conjecture, the Copiousness of his Expressions was owing in some Measure to the Civility of his Breeding, as well as to the Luxuriance of his Fancy; and indeed, my Lord, that is the Fault I have found in the Writings of Gentlemen, that sometimes they overflow with Words. This proceedeth, I believe, from their daily Complaisance, which runs them into Variety of Expressions on the same Subject; whereas your Scholars are more close, and, as if their Learning were as narrow as their Fortune, they are frugal of their Words, and not willing to let any go for Ornament, if they will not serve for Use. Some People may call this a small Piece of Cri-

54 *Instances in Cæsar and Ovid,*  
ticism; all that I would prove by  
it, if it be not well founded, is,  
that *Ovid* was a Man of Breeding;  
and though *Virgil* and *Horace* were  
Courtiers too, yet they fell short of  
him in Courtliness of Expression,  
however they exceeded him in Ma-  
jesty of Thought, in Closeness and  
Exactness of Style. And for *Ho-*  
*race*, my Lord, who was an hum-  
ble Servant of the Ladies, as well  
as he, after we have acknowledg-  
ed him a wonderful Genius, of a  
peculiar Happiness of Expression  
both in the sublime and familiar  
Way, we must ascribe the Softness  
and Easiness of his Style to the  
Court and Love. In short, my  
Lord, *Ovid* was a Gentleman, and  
the others not; his good Breeding  
was natural to him from his In-  
fancy; theirs was acquired in their  
riper Years, and would never fit so  
handsomely upon them. *Terence,*  
my

Horace, Virgil, and Terence. 55  
my Lord, who was much elder than  
they, may seem an Exception;  
there is no Address more civil and  
accomplished than his, throughout  
his Plays, and his Gentlemen ap-  
pear truly such upon all Occasions;  
but this possibly may be accounted  
for more easily than some *Phænomena*  
in Philosophy, if I may have  
Leave to suppose that all the As-  
sistance he received from *Scipio* and  
*Lælius*, was, in this Part of his  
Characters; and while the Come-  
dian took Care to preserve them in  
the Humour and Manners he had  
given them, his noble Friends might  
help him in giving them the true  
Turn of Gentlemen. We have se-  
veral others who are recorded for  
celebrated Wits among the *Nobility*  
and *Gentry* of *Rome*, but I need  
not detain your Lordship any longer  
there.



56 *The Court of K. Charles II.*

After the Court of *Augustus*, we may mention the Court of King *Charles II.* and find my Lord *Rochester* and *Dorset*, the Duke of *Buckingham* that was then, and the Duke of *Buckingham* that is now, Paramount in Wit, and as graceful in their Writings, as in their Persons: The Wit of some of them, indeed, was scandalously abused, but otherwise their Satyr was courtly, and their Poetry upon all other Subjects, in the last Perfection. My Lord *Roscommon*, inferior to none in Soundness of Judgment, surpasseth them in the Innocency and Usefulness of his Writings: Sir *Robert Howard*, Sir *Charles Sidley*, Sir *John Denham*, Mr. *Waller*, Sir *George Etherege*, Mr. *Walsh*, and I may add Mr. *Wycherly*, writ like themselves, with Spirit, Ease and Strength; their Learning and Quality adorn each other, and you  
read

read their Education as Gentlemen as well as Scholars, in their Compositions. Mr. *Dryden*, *Oldham*, and other celebrated Wits, I forbear to name, because they want that distinguishing Character of Affability, Courtesy, and fine Breeding in their Works; or I may name them upon Comparison with the others, to shew the Difference, and maintain my Point. Mr. *Dryden* was indeed a Gentleman, but he writ more like a Scholar; and though the greatest Master of Poetry the last Age could boast, he wanted that Easiness and Familiarity, that Air of Freedom and Unconstraint, that genteel and accomplished Manner of Expression, which is more sensibly to be perceived, than described.

To come to the present Times; my Lord (a) *Hallifax* beareth a Ti-

(a) *Charles Montague.*

tle consecrated to Wit; and if he doth not reach the *Saville* Family in Heighth of Quality, he doth not fall below them in the Excellency of his Pen, and in Poetry he soareth above them. Mr. *Granville* is the poetical Son of *Waller*: We observed with Pleasure, Similitude of Wit in the Difference of Years, and in Mr. *Granville* do meet at once the Fire of his Father's Youth, and the Judgment of his Age. Others I forbear, because though a Thousand Occasions testify their Abilities, their Modesty hath hitherto concealed their Works and Names; only give me Leave to add, it is the Opinion of some good Judges, that if the Duke of *Marlborough* would give us his own *Memoirs*, we should find he could *Write*, as well as *Fight*, like *Cæsar*. I am fallen from Verse to Prose, my Lord, and here I must not pass  
by

*Sir William Temple, &c.* 59

by *Sir William Temple*, the most perfect Pattern of good *Writing* and good *Breeding*, this Nation hath produced. Perhaps *Mr. Boyle's* Book in Defence of *Phalaris*, will be charged upon some *Sophist* too; but taking it for *Genuine* at present, if we own *Dr. Bentley* is the better Critic, we must acknowledge my Lord *Orrery* is much the gentlest Writer.

The Observation I have made, is so universal, it were endless to pursue it in any farther Examples, and, my Lord, some few Instances excepted, there is as much Difference between the Writings of Men of Quality and Scholars, as there is in the Behaviour of a *Dancing-Master* and a *Gentleman*.

Your Lordship standeth upon such Advantage of Ground, that, when you have finished your Studies, you need only write, and you



60 *Rules for forming a just Style.*

will excel. Your Education giveth you the most difficult Part, and that Easiness and handsome Address in Writing, which is hardest to be attained by Persons bred in a meaner Way, will be familiar to your Lordship. And if ever you do write, you will write as you speak, with all the Civility and good Breeding in the World. This, my Lord, will certainly be the happy Turn of your Pen: Nothing can be wanting, but a Store of sound Learning, to be put into so genteel a Dress; and when your Lordship shall have furnished your self with that, and come to know the Correctness of Style, the Graces and Beauties of it will be natural and charming in all your Compositions.

To assist your Lordship, therefore, as far as Art may be an Help to Nature, I shall proceed to say something of what is required in a  
finished

*A perfect Piece defined.* 61

finished Piece to make it compleat in all its Parts, and masterly in the whole.

I would not lay down any impracticable Schemes, nor trouble your Lordship with a dry formal Method: The Rule of Writing, like that of our Duty, is perfect in its Kind; but we must make Allowances for the Infirmities of Nature, and since *none is without his Faults*, the most that can be said, is, that *He is the best Writer, against whom the Fewest can be alledged.*

“ A Composition is then perfect,  
“ my Lord, when the Matter riseth out of the Subject, when the Thoughts are agreeable to the Matter, and the Expressions suitable to the Thoughts, when there is no Inconsistency from the Beginning to the End; when the whole is perspicuous in the beautiful Order of its Parts, and  
“ formed

62     *A perfect Piece defined.*

“ formed in due Symmetry and Pro-  
“ portion.

It is the common Absurdity of raw and injudicious Writers, to propose one Thing for their Subject, and run off to another: They are not Masters of what they undertake, the Compass of their Knowledge is too narrow, and their Shoulders are too weak to sustain the Work. From this fundamental Error flow all the other Vices and Corruptions of Writing; Matter foreign to the Subject, wild, incoherent Fancies instead of Thought, and Expressions that have no other Commendation, than that they are as childish as their Thoughts. What crude undigested Volumes of this Sort, have we seen? How many tedious Sheets, without Argument or Consistency? Such, my Lord, are many of the *Dissenters* Writings, in point of Faith,

*Thoughts suited to the Subject.* 63

Faith, Doctrine and Practice, though we have but few of their practical Pieces, and those we have, that are of any Value, were written by the best Pens among them.

But when a Man throughly understandeth his Subject, and knoweth what is consistent, or inconsistent with it, he will write upon it with more or less Applause, according to the Scope and Compass of his Thoughts: Some are bound up in narrow Schemes of Things, while Men of Genius and freer Spirits look abroad into Nature, and discover a Thousand beautiful Relations that lie concealed to those, who trade only in dry Schemes and Systems. Our Thoughts must be conformable to the Matter and Subject that lie before us, but we have full Liberty to range, provided we can command our Fancy, and bring it home to the Purpose. The Thought  
may



64 *Thoughts suited to the Subject.*

may be either too narrow, or too wide; too poor and mean to give either Life or Light to our Writings, or too wandering and distant to bear any Relation to the Subject. I am not speaking of the Brightness and Beauty, but of the Propriety of Thought; though, if the Thoughts be bright and beautiful, as well as proper, they add, no doubt, a Grace and Splendor to the Discourse; only let them be just and natural, and it dependeth upon the Genius of the Writer to give them more Force and Fire. *Horace* hath drawn the Picture of those absurd Painters and Poets, that join a Woman's Head to a Fish's Tail, and crowd Contradictions in the same Piece together. He hath exposed and ridiculed those trifling Poetafters that spend themselves in glaring Descriptions, and would compensate for their Dulness and  
Inca-

*Thoughts suited to the Subject.* 65

Incapacity, by sewing here and there some Cloth of Gold on their Sackcloth. All inconsiderate Writers, or Writers not furnished for Consideration, are the same. Their Imagination either rambles, or is low and dull; either it cannot rise to the Subject, or wandereth from it. 'Tis nothing but a Vapour and false Fire; and if in reading those wretched Scriblers we look for any Meaning, we only follow an *Ignis fatuus* till we are tired.

Some Peoples Heads are either so empty, or so disconcerted, that nothing is more removed from the Matter they have laid out to treat on, than their Thoughts; and if it sometimes happeneth that they do not wander quite away from their Purpose, the Misfortune is, that on the gravest, noblest Subjects, their Thoughts are light and foolish, poor and mean; and on the most inconsiderable

66 *Propriety of Thought.*

considerable trifling Matters, they are all Noise and Bombast, affecting Splendor and Magnificence in Things that will endure neither Light nor Ornament, ever rising where they should sink, and falling where they should rise.

There is a Chain of Relations in Nature, which must not be broken, nor twisted with any other String: The whole World of Being, the Qualities, Properties, Accidents and Affections of Things are distributed into proper Classes, as they are compatible or inconsistent with one another. Propriety of Thought, therefore, must arise from a competent Knowledge of the Nature and Decency of Things; in being acquainted with what is capable of being said, and what is fit to be spoken upon any Subject. And Thought is then in the last Perfection, when it is so bright, so lively,  
so

so just, so full, that on the same Subject you cannot invent any finer, or more proper, in the whole Compass of Nature and Imagination.

There is a close Connection between the Thoughts and Words; and where a Man hath thoroughly digested the one, the other will follow not only with Ease, but Propriety, supposing him a perfect Master of the Language he writeth in. It must be a great Fault of the Judgment, if where the Thoughts are proper, the Expressions are not so too. A Disagreement between these seldom happens, but among Men of more recondite Studies, and what they call deep Learning, especially among your Antiquaries and Schoolmen.

In every sprightly Genius, the Expression will ever be lively as the Thoughts. All the Danger is, that  
a Wit



68 *Expression suited to the Thoughts.*

a Wit too fruitful should run out into unnecessary Branches; but when it is matured by Age, and corrected by Judgment, the Writer will prune the luxuriant Boughs, and cut off the superfluous Shoots of Fancy, thereby giving both Strength and Beauty to his Work.

Perhaps, my Lord, this Piece of Discipline is to young Writers the greatest Self-Denial in the World. To confine the Fancy, to stifle the Birth, much more to throw away the beautiful Offspring of the Brain, is a Trial, that none but the most delicate and lively Wits can be put to. It is their Praise, that they are obliged to retrench more Wit, than others have to lavish: The Chip-pings and Filings of these Jewels, could they be preserved, are of more Value, than the whole Mass of ordinary Authors; and it is a *Maxim* with me, that *he hath not Wit*

*The Design of Expression.* 69

*Wit enough, who hath not a great deal to spare.*

My Lord, it is by no Means necessary for me to run out into the several Sorts of Writing: We have general Rules to judge of all, without being particular upon any, tho' the Style of an *Orator* be different from that of an *Historian*, and a *Poet's* from both.

The Design of Expression is to convey our Thoughts truly and clearly to the World, in such a Manner as is most probable to attain the End we propose, in communicating what we have conceived to the Publick; and therefore Men have not thought it enough to write plainly, unless they wrote agreeably, so as to engage the Attention, and work upon the Affections, as well as inform the Understanding of their Readers; for which Reason all Arts have been  
invented

70 *The Design of Expression.*

invented to make their Writings pleasing, as well as profitable; and those Arts are very commendable and honest: They are no Trick, no Delusion or Imposition on the Senses and Understanding of Mankind; for they are founded in Nature, and formed upon observing her Operations in all the various Passions, and Workings of our Minds.

To this we owe all the Beauties and Embellishments of Style: All Figures and Schemes of Speech, and those several Decorations that are used in Writings to enliven and adorn the Work. The Flourishes of Fancy resemble the Flourishes of the Pen in Mechanick Writers, and the Illuminators of Manuscripts, and of the Press, borrowed their Title perhaps from the Illumination, which a bright Genius every where giveth to his Work,  
and

and disperfeth through his Composition.

The Commendation of this Art of enlightening and adorning a Subject, lieth in a right Distribution of the Shades and Light. It is in Writing, as in Picture, in which the Art is to observe where the Lights will fall, to produce the moft beautiful Parts to the Day, and caft in Shades what we cannot hope will fhine to Advantage.

It were endless to purfue this Subject through all the Ornaments and Illustrations of Speech; and yet I would not difmifs it without pointing at the general Rules, and neceffary Qualifications required in thofe who would attempt to fhine in the Productions of their Pen. And therefore your Lordship muft pardon me if I feem to go back; for we cannot raife any regular and  
durable



72 *Embellishments of Style.*

durable Pile of Building without laying a firm Foundation.

The first Thing requisite to a *just Style*, is a perfect Mastery in the Language we write in; this is not so easily attained, as is commonly imagined, and dependeth upon a competent Knowledge of the Force and Propriety of Words, a good natural Taste of Strength and Delicacy, and all the Beauties of Expression. It is my own Opinion, that all the Rules and critical Observations in the World, will never bring a Man to a *just Style*, who hath not of himself a natural easy Way of Writing; but they will improve a good Genius, where Nature leadeth the Way, provided he is not too scrupulous, and doth not make himself a Slave to his Rules; for that will introduce a Stiffness and Affectation, which are  
utterly

utterly abhorrent from all good Writing.

By a perfect Mastery in any Language, I understand not only a ready Command of Words, upon every Occasion, not only the Force, and Propriety of Words, as to their Sense and Signification, but more especially the Purity and Idiom of the Language; for in this a perfect Mastery doth consist. 'Tis to know what is *English*, and what is *Latin*, what is *French*, *Spanish*, or *Italian*, to be able to mark the Bounds of each Language we write in, to point out the distinguishing Characters, and the peculiar Phrases of each Tongue. What Expressions, or Manner of expressing, is common to any Language besides our own, and what is properly and peculiarly our Phrase, and Way of Speaking. For this is to speak or write *English* in Purity and Perfection, to

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74      *The Purity and Idiom.*

let the Streams run clear and unmix'd, without taking in other Languages in the Course. In *English*, therefore, I would have all *Gallacisms* (for instance) avoided, that our Tongue may be sincere, that we may keep to our own Language, and not follow the *French* Mode in our Speech, as we do in our Cloaths. It is convenient and profitable sometimes to import a foreign Word, and naturalize the Phrase of another Nation, but this is very sparingly to be allowed, and every Syllable of foreign Growth ought immediately to be discarded, if its Use and Ornament to our Language be not very evident.

While the *Romans* studied, and used the *Greek* Tongue only to improve and adorn their own, the *Latin* flourished, and grew every Year more copious, more elegant, and expressive; but in a few Years  
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after the Ladies and Beaux of *Rome* affected to speak *Greek*, and regarded nothing but the Softness and Effeminacy of that noble Language, they weakened and corrupted their native Tongue: And the monstrous Affectation of our travelled Ladies and Gentlemen to speak in the *French* Air, *French* Tone, *French* Terms, to dress, to cook, to write, to court in *French*, corrupted at once our Language and our Manners, and introduced an abominable Gallimaufry of *French* and *English* mixed together, that made the Innovators ridiculous to all Men of Sense. The *French* Tongue hath undoubtedly its Graces and Beauties, and I am not against any real Improvement of our own Language from that or any other; but we are always so foolish, or unfortunate, as never to make any Advantage of our Neighbours.



We affect nothing of theirs, but what is silly and ridiculous; and by neglecting the substantial Use of their Language, we only enervate and spoil our own.

Languages, like our Bodies, are in a perpetual Flux, and stand in need of Recruits to supply the Place of those Words that are continually falling off through Disuse; and since it is so, my Lord, I think 'tis better to *raise* them at *Home*, than *Abroad*. We had better *rely* on our *own Troops*, than *foreign Forces*; and I believe we have sufficient Strength and Numbers within ourselves: There is a vast Treasure, an inexhaustible Fund, in the old *English*, from whence Authors may draw constant Supplies, as our Officers make their surest Recruits from the Coal-Works and the Mines. The Weight, the Strength, and Significancy of many antiquated  
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ed Words, should recommend them to Use again. 'Tis only wiping off the Rust they have contracted, and separating them from the Dross they lie mingled with, and both in Value and Beauty they will rise above the Standard, rather than fall below it.

Perhaps our Tongue is not so musical to the Ear, nor so abundant in Multiplicity of Words; but its Strength is real, and its Words are therefore the more expressive: The peculiar Character of our Language is, that it is close, compact, and full; and our Writings (if your Lordship will excuse two *Latin Words*) come nearest to what *Tully* means by his *Pressa Oratio*. They are all Weight, and Substance, good Measure pressed together, and running over in a Redundancy of Sense, and not of Words. And therefore the Purity of our Lan-

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78 *Purity of the English Tongue.*

guage consisteth in preserving this Character, in writing with the *English Strength and Spirit*: Let us not envy others, that they are more soft, diffused, and rarified; be it our Commendation to write as we pay in true *Sterling*; if we want Supplies, we had better revive *old Words*, than create *new* ones. I look upon our Language as good Bullion, if we do not debase it with too much Allay; and let me leave this Censure with your Lordship, That he who corrupteth the Purity of the *English Tongue* with the most specious foreign Words and Phrases, is just as wise as those Modish Ladies that change their Plate for China: For which, my Lord, I think the laudable Traffick of old Cloaths, is much the fairest Barter.

After this Regard to the Purity of our Language, the next Quality  
of

*Plainness and Perspicuity.* 79

of a just Style, is its Plainness and Perspicuity. My Lord, this is the greatest Commendation we can give an Author, and the best Argument that he is Master of the Language he writeth in, and the Subject he writeth upon, when we understand him, and see into the Scope and Tendency of his Thoughts as we read him. All Obscurity of Expression, and Darknes of Sense, do arise from the Confusion of the Writer's Thoughts, and his Want of proper Words. If a Man hath not a clear Perception of the Matters he undertaketh to treat of, be his Style never so plain as to the Words he useth, it never can be clear; and if his Thoughts upon his Subject be never so just and distinct, unless he hath a ready Command of Words, and a Faculty of easy Writing in plain obvious Expressions, the Words will perplex



80 *Offences against this Rule.*

the Sense, and cloud the Clearness of his Thoughts.

It is the Unhappiness of some, that they are not able to express themselves clearly: Their Heads are crowded with a Multiplicity of undigested Knowledge, which lieth confused in the Brain, without any Order or Distinction. It is the Vice of others, to affect Obscurity in their Thoughts and Language, to write in a difficult crabbed Style, and perplex the Reader with an intricate Meaning in more intricate Words.

The common Way of offending against Plainness and Perspicuity of Style, is an Affectation of hard unusual Words, and of close contracted Periods; the Fault of Pedants and sententious Writers, that are vainly ostentatious of their Learning, or their Wisdom. Hard Words and quaint Expressions are abominable:

nable: Wherever your Lordship meeteth such a Writer, throw him aside for a Coxcomb. Some Authors of Reputation have used a short and concise Way of Expression, I must own; and if they are not so clear as others, the Fault is to be laid on the *Brevity* they labour after: For while we study to be concise, we can hardly avoid being obscure. We crowd our Thoughts into too small a Compass, and are so sparing of our Words, that we will not afford enough to express our Meaning.

There is another Extream in obscure Writers, my Lord, not much taken notice of, which some empty conceited Heads are apt to run into, out of a Prodigality of Words, and a Want of Sense. This is the Extravagance of your copious Writers, who lose their Meaning in the Multitude of Words, and bury their

Sense under Heaps of Phrases. Their Understanding is rather raried, than condensed: Their Meaning, we cannot say, is dark and thick; it is too light and subtle to be discerned; it is spread so thin, and diffused so wide, that it is hard to be collected. Two Lines would express all they say in two Pages: 'Tis nothing but whipt Syllabub and Froth, a little Varnish, and Gilding, without any Solidity, or Substance.

My Lord, the deepest Rivers have the plainest Surface, and the purest Waters are always clearest. Chrystal is not the less solid for being transparent; the Value of a Style riseth like the Value of precious Stones. If it be dark and cloudy, it is in vain to polish it: It beareth its Worth in its native Looks, and the same Art which enhanceth

hanceth its Price when it is clear,  
only debaseth it if it be dull.

Your Lordship seeth I have borrowed some Metaphors to explain my Thoughts, and it is, I believe, impossible to describe the Plainness and Clearness of Style, without some Expressions clearer than the Terms I am otherwise bound up to use.

Your Lordship must give me Leave to go on with you to the Decorations and Ornaments of Style: There is no Inconsistency between the Plainness and Perspicuity, and the Ornament of Writing. A Style, my Lord, resembleth Beauty, where the Face is clear and plain as to Symmetry and Proportion, but is capable of wonderful Improvements, as to Features and Complexion. If I may transgress in too frequent Allusions, because I would make every thing



84 *The Ornaments of Style.*

plain to your Lordship, I would pass on from Painters to Statuaries, whose Excellence it is, at first to form true and just Proportions, and afterwards to give them that Softness, that Expression, that Strength, and Delicacy, which make them almost breath and live.

My Lord, the Decorations of Style are formed out of those several Schemes and Figures, which are contrived to express the Passions and Motions of our Minds in our Speech; to give Life and Ornament, Grace and Beauty, to our Expressions. I shall not undertake the Rhetorician's Province, in giving your Lordship an Account of all the Figures they have invented and those several Ornaments of Writing, whose Grace and Commendation lie in being used with Judgment and Propriety. It were endless to pursue this Subject thro'  
all

all the Schemes and Illustrations of Speech: But there are some common Forms, which every Writer upon every Subject may use, to enliven and adorn his Work.

These, my Lord, are Metaphor and Similitude, and those Images and Representations that are drawn in the strongest and most lively Colours, to imprint what the Writer would have his Readers conceive more deeply on their Minds. In the Choice, and in the Use of these, your ordinary Writers are most apt to offend. Images are very sparingly to be introduced; their proper Place is in Poems and Oration, and their Use is, to move Pity or Terror, Admiration, Compassion, Anger and Resentment, by representing something very affectionate, or very dreadful, very astonishing, very miserable, or very provoking to our Thoughts. They  
give

86 *Metaphor and Similitude.*

give a wonderful Force and Beauty to the Subject, where they are painted by a masterly Hand; but if they are either weakly drawn, or unskilfully placed, they raise no Passion but Indignation in the Reader.

The most common Ornaments, my Lord, are Metaphor and Similitude. One is an Allusion to Words, the other to Things; and both have their Beauties, if properly applied.

Similitudes ought to be drawn from the most familiar and best known Particulars in the World: If any thing is dark and obscure in them, the Purpose of using them is defeated; and that which is not clear itself, can never give Light to any thing that wants it. It is the idle Fancy of some poor Brains, to run out perpetually into a Course of Similitudes, confounding their  
Subject

*The Abuse of Similitudes* 87

Subject by the Multitude of Likenesses, and making it like so many Things, that it is like nothing at all. This trifling Humour is good for nothing, but to convince us that the Author is in the Dark himself; and while he is likening his Subject to every Thing, he knoweth not what it is like.

There is another tedious Fault in some *Simile Men*, which is drawing their Comparisons into a great Length and Minute Particulars, where it is of no Importance whether the Resemblance holdeth or no. But the true Art of illustrating any Subject by Similitude, is, first, to pitch on such a Resemblance as all the World will agree in; and then, without being careful to have it run on all Four, to touch it only in the strongest Lines, and the nearest Likeness. And this will secure us, my Lord, from all  
Stiffness



Stiffness and Formality in Similitude, and deliver us from the nauseous Repetition of *As* and *So*, which some *so so* Writers, if I may beg Leave to call them *so*, are continually founding in our Ears.

I have nothing to say, my Lord, to those Gentlemen, who bring Similitudes, and forget the Resemblance. All the Pleasure we can take, when we meet these promising Sparks, is in the Disappointment, where we find their Fancy is so like their Subject, that it is not like at all.

Metaphors, my Lord, require great Judgment and Consideration in the Use of them. They are a shorter Similitude, where the Likeness is rather implied than expressed. The Signification of one Word in Metaphors is transferred to another, and we talk of one Thing in  
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the Terms and Propriety of another. But, my Lord, there must be a common Resemblance, some original Likeness in Nature, some Correspondence and easy Transition, or Metaphors are shocking and confused.

The Beauty of them displays itself in their Easiness and Propriety, where they are naturally introduced; but where they are forced, and crowded, too frequent and various, and do not rise out of the Course of Thought, but are constrained and pressed into the Service, instead of making the Discourse more lively and chearful, they make it fullen, dull and gloomy.

Your Lordship must form your Judgment upon the best Models, and the most celebrated Pens, where you will find the Metaphor in all its Grace and Strength, shedding a Lustre and Beauty on the Work.

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For it ought never to be used, but when it giveth greater Force to the Sentence, an Illustration to the Thought, and insinuateth a silent Argument in the Allusion. The Use of Metaphors is not only to convey the Thought in a more pleasing Manner, but to give it a stronger Impression, and enforce it on the Mind. Where this is not regarded, they are vain, and trifling Trash; and in a due Observation of this, in a pure, chaste, natural Expression, consist the Justness, Beauty, and Delicacy of Style.

I have said nothing of Epithets; their Business is to express the Nature of the Things they are applied to; and the Choice of them dependeth upon a good Judgment, to distinguish what are the most proper Titles to be given on all Occasions, and a compleat Knowledge

ledge in the Accidents, Qualities, and Affections of every thing in the World. They are of most Ornament when they are of Use; they are to determine the Character of every Person, and decide the Merits of every Cause; Conscience and Justice are to be regarded, and great Skill and Exactness are required in the Use of them. For it is of great Importance to call Things by their right Names: The Points of Satyr, and Strains of Compliment, depend upon it, otherwise we may make an Ass of a Lion, commend a Man in Satyr, and lampoon him in Panegyric. Here also, my Lord, there is Room for Genius: Common Justice and Judgment should direct us to say what is proper at least, but it is Parts and Fire that will prompt us to the most lively and most forcible Epithets that can be applied: and 'tis in their  
Energy



Energy and Propriety their Beauty lieth.

Allegories I need not mention, because they are not so much any Ornament of Style, as an artful Way of recommending Truth to the World in a borrowed Shape, and a Dress more agreeable to the Fancy, than naked Truth herself can be. Truth is ever most beautiful and evident in her native Dress. And the Arts that are used to convey her to our Minds, are no Argument that she is deficient, but so many Testimonies of the Corruption of our Nature, when Truth, of all Things the plainest and sincerest, is forced to gain Admittance to us in Disguise, and court us in Masquerade.

My Lord, there is one Ingredient more required to the Perfection of Style, which I have partly mentioned already in speaking of the  
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Suitableness of the Thoughts to the Subject, and of the Words to the Thoughts; but your Lordship will give me Leave to consider it in another Light with regard to the Majesty and Dignity of the Subject.

It is fit, as we have said already, that the Thoughts and Expression should be suited to the Matter on all Occasions; but in nobler and greater Subjects, especially where the Theme is sacred and divine, it must be our Care to think and write up to the Dignity and Majesty of the Things we presume to treat of: Nothing little, mean, or low; no childish Thoughts, or boyish Expressions, will be endured: All must be awful, and grave, and great, and solemn. The noblest Sentiments must be conveyed in the weightiest Words: All Ornaments and Illustrations must be borrowed

borrowed from the richest Parts of universal Nature; and in divine Subjects, especially when we attempt to speak of God, of his Wisdom, Goodness and Power, of his Mercy and Justice, of his Dispensations and Providence, by all which he is pleased to manifest himself to the Sons of Men; we must raise our Thoughts, and enlarge our Minds, and search all the Treasures of Knowledge for every Thing that is great, wonderful and magnificent: We can only express our Thoughts of the Creator in the Works of his Creation; and the brightest of these can only give us some faint Shadows of his Greatness and his Glory. The strongest Figures are too weak, the most exalted Language too low, to express his ineffable Excellence. No *Hyperbole* can be brought to heighten our Thoughts; for in so sublime a  
Theme

Theme nothing can be *hyperbolical*. The Riches of Imagination are poor, and all the Rivers of Eloquence are dry in supplying Thought on an infinite Subject. How poor and mean, how base and groveling, are the Heathen Conceptions of the Deity! something sublime and noble must needs be said on so great an Occasion; but in this great Article the most celebrated of the Heathen Pens seem to flag and sink; they bear up in no Proportion to the Dignity of the Theme, as if they were depressed by the Weight, and dazled with the Splendor of the Subject.

We have no Instances to produce of any Writers that rise at all to the Majesty and Dignity of the Divine Attributes, except the sacred Penmen. No less than divine Inspiration could enable Men to write worthily of God, and none but the Spirit



96 *The Scripture only Sublime.*

Spirit of God knew how to express his Greatness, and display his Glory: In comparison of these divine Writers, the greatest *Genius's*, and noblest Wits of the Heathen World, are low and dull. The sublime Majesty, and royal Magnificence of the Scripture Poems, are above the Reach, and beyond the Power of all mortal Wit. Take the best and liveliest Poems of Antiquity, and read them, as we do the Scriptures, in a Prose Translation, and they are flat and poor. *Horace*, and *Virgil*, and *Homer*, lose their Spirits and their Strength in the Transfusion, to that Degree, that we have hardly Patience to read them, But, my Lord, the Sacred Writings, even in our Translation, preserve their Majesty and their Glory, and very far surpass the brightest and noblest Compositions of *Greece* and *Rome*. And  
this

this is not owing to the Richness and Solemnity of the Eastern Eloquence; for it holdeth in no other Instance, but to the divine Direction and Assistance of the holy Writers. For let me only make this Remark, that the most literal Translation of the Scriptures, in the most natural Signification of the Words, is generally the best; and the same Punctuality which debaseth other Writings, preserveth the Spirit and Majesty of the sacred Text. It can suffer no Improvement from human Wit; and we may observe, that those who have presumed to heighten the Expressions by a poetical Translation or Paraphrase, have sunk in the Attempt, and all the Decorations of their Verse, whether *Greek* or *Latin*, have not been able to reach the Dignity, the Majesty, and Solemnity of our Prose: So that

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98 *Above all Improvement.*

the Prose of Scripture cannot be improved by Verse, and even the divine Poetry is most like it self in Prose. One Observation more, I would leave with your Lordship; *Milton* himself, as great a Genius as he was, oweth his Superiority over *Homer* or *Virgil*, in Majesty of Thought, and Splendor of Expression, to the Scriptures: They are the Fountain from which he derived his Light; the sacred Treasure that enriched his Fancy, and furnished him with all the Truth and Wonders of God and his Creation, of Angels and Men, which no mortal Brain was able either to discover or conceive; and in him, my Lord, of all human Writers, you will meet all his Sentiments and Words raised and suited to the Greatness and Dignity of the Subject.

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*Order and Proportion.* 99

I have detained your Lordship the longer on this Majesty of Style, being, perhaps, my self carried away with the Greatness and Pleasure of the Contemplation; what I have dwelt so much on, with respect to divine Subjects, is more easily to be observed with reference to human: For in all Things below Divinity, we are rather able to exceed than fall short; and in adorning all other Subjects, our Words and Sentiments may rise in a just Proportion to them; nothing is above the Reach of Man, but Heaven; and the same Wit can raise a *Human* Subject, that only debaseth a *Divine*.

After all these Excellencies of Style, in Purity, in Plainness and Perspicuity, in Ornament and Majesty, are consider'd, a finish'd Piece of what Kind soever must shine in the Order and Proportion



of the whole; for Light riseth out of Order, and Beauty from Proportion. In Architecture and Painting, these fill and relieve the Eye. A just Disposition giveth us a clear View of the whole at once, and the due Symmetry and Proportion of every Part in it self, and of all together, leave no Vacancy in our Thoughts or Eyes; nothing is wanting, every Thing is compleat, and we are satisfied in beholding.

But, my Lord, when I speak of Order and Proportion, I do not intend any stiff and formal Method, but only a proper Distribution of the Parts in general, where they follow in a natural Course, and are not confounded with one another. Laying down a Scheme, and marking out the Divisions and Subdivisions of a Discourse, are only necessary in Systems, and some  
Pieces

Pieces of Controversy and Argumentation; your Lordship sees, however, that I have ventured to write without any declared Order; and this is allowable, where the Method opens as you read, and the Order discovereth it self in the Progress of the Subject: But certainly, my Lord, of all Pieces that were ever written in a professed and stated Method, and distinguished by the Number and Succession of their Parts, our *English Sermons* are the compleatest in Order and Proportion; the Method is so easy and natural, the Parts bear so just a Proportion to one another, that among many others, this may pass for a peculiar Commendation of them: For those Divisions and Particulars which obscure and perplex other Writings, give a clearer Light to ours. All that I would insinuate, therefore, is only this, that it

is not necessary to lay the Method we use before the Reader, only to write, and then he will read, in Order.

But it requireth, my Lord, a full Command of the Subject, a distinct View to keep it always in Sight, or else without some Method first designed, we shall be in Danger of losing it, and wandering after it, till we have lost our selves, and bewilder'd the Reader.

A prescribed Method is necessary for weaker Heads, but the Beauty of Order is its Freedom and Unconstraint: It must be dispersed and shine in all the Parts through the whole Performance, but there is no Necessity of writing in Trammels, when we can move more at Ease without them; neither is the Proportion of Writing to be measured out like the Proportions of a Horse, where every Part must be drawn in  
the

the minutest Respect to the Size and Bigness of the rest; but it is to be taken by the Mind, and formed upon a general View and Consideration of the whole. The Statuary that carveth *Hercules* in Stone, or casts him in Brass, may be obliged to take his Dimensions from his Foot, but the Poet that describeth him, is not bound up to the Geometers Rule, nor is an Author under any Obligation to write by the Scale.

These Hints will serve to give your Lordship some Notion of Order and Proportion; and I must not dwell too long upon them, lest I transgress the Rules I am laying down.

My Lord, I shall make no formal Recapitulation of what I have delivered. Out of all these Rules together, rises a just Style, and a perfect Composition. All the La-



titude that can be admitted, is in the Ornament of Writing; we do not require every Author to shine in Gold and Jewels: There is a Moderation to be used in the Pomp and Trappings of a Discourse: It is not necessary that every Part should be embellish'd and adorn'd but the Decorations should be skillfully distributed through the whole. Too full and glaring a Light is offensive, and confounds the Eyes: In Heaven it self there are Vacancies and Spaces between the Stars; and the Day is not less beautiful for being interspersed with Clouds: They only moderate the Brightness of the Sun, and without diminishing from his Splendor, gild and adorn themselves with his Rays. But to descend from the Skies, my Lord, 'tis in Writing as in Dress. The richest Habits are not always the compleatest; and a Gentleman  
may

*Rules depend on each other.* 105

may make a better Figure in a plain Suit, than in an embroider'd Coat. The Dress dependeth upon the Imagination, but must be adjusted by the Judgment, contrary to the Opinion of the Ladies, who value nothing but a good Fancy in the Choice of their Cloaths. The first Excellence is to write in Purity plainly and clearly; there is no Dispensation from these, but afterwards you have your Choice of Colours, and may enliven, adorn, and paint your Subject as you please.

In Writing, the Rules have a Relation and Dependence on one another. They are held in one social Bond, and joined, like the Moral Virtues, and Liberal Arts, in a Sort of Harmony and Concord. He that cannot write pure, plain *English*, must never pretend to write at all; 'tis in vain for him to dress and adorn his Discourse; the finer

106 *To have a Right Taste.*

he endeavoureth to make it, he maketh it only the more ridiculous. And on the other Side, let a Man write in the exactest Purity and Propriety of the Language, if he hath not Life and Fire to give his Work some Force and Spirit, 'tis nothing but a meer Corps, and a lumpish unweildy Mass of Matter. But every true Genius who is a perfect Master of the Language he writeth in, will let no fitting Ornaments and Decorations be wanting. His Fancy floweth in the richest Vein, and giveth his Pieces such lively Colours, and so beautiful a Complexion, that you would almost say his own Blood and Spirits were transfused into the Work.

A perfect Mastery and Elegance of Style is to be learn'd from the common Rules, but must be improved by reading the Orators and Poets, and the celebrated Masters

in

in every Kind; this will give your Lordship a right Taste, and a true Relish; and when you can distinguish the Beauties of every finish'd Piece, you will write your self with equal Commendation.

I do not assert, my Lord, that every good Writer must have a Genius for Poetry, I know *Tully* is an undeniable Exception; but I will venture to affirm, that a Soul that is not moved with Poetry, and hath no Taste that way, is too dull and lumpish ever to write with any Prospect of being read. It is a fatal Mistake, and simple Superstition, to discourage Youth from Poetry, and endeavour to prejudice them against it; if they are of a poetical Genius, there is no restraining them: *Ovid*, your Lordship knoweth, was deaf to his Father's frequent Admonitions; but if they are not quite smitten, and bewitch'd



with Love of Verse, they should be trained to it, to make them Masters of every kind of Poetry, that by learning to imitate the Originals, they may arrive at a right Conception, and a true Taste of their Authors; and being able to write in Verse upon Occasion, I can assure your Lordship, is no Disadvantage to Prose; for without relishing the one, a Man must never pretend to any Taste of the other.

Taste, my Lord, is a Metaphor borrowed from the Palate, by which we approve or dislike what we eat and drink, from the Agreeableness or Disagreeableness of the Relish in our Mouth. Nature directs us in the common Use, and every Body can tell sweet from bitter, what is sharp, or sour, or vapid, or nauseous; but it requireth Senses more refined and exercised, to discover every Taste that is most perfect in  
its

its Kind; every Palate is not a Judge of that, and yet Drinking is more used than Reading; all that I pretend to know of the Matter, is, my Lord, that Wine should be, like a Style, clear, deep, bright and strong, sincere and pure, sound and dry, (as our Advertisements do well express it) which last is a commendable Term, that contains the Juice of the richest Spirits, and only keepeth out all Cold and Dampness.

It is common to commend a Man, my Lord, for an Ear to Music, and a Taste of Painting, which are nothing but a just Discernment of what is excellent and most perfect in them: The first dependeth entirely on the Ear; a Man can never expect to be a Master, that hath not an Ear tuned and set to Music: And you can no more sing an *Ode* without an Ear, than without

out a Genius you can write one. Painting, my Lord, we should think, requireth some Understanding in the Art, and exact Knowledge of the best Masters Manner to be a Judge of it; but this Faculty, like the rest, is founded in Nature. Knowledge in the Art, and frequent Conversation with the best Originals, will certainly perfect a Man's Judgment; but if there is not a natural Sagacity and Aptness, Experience will be of no great Service. A good Taste is an Argument of a great Soul, as well as a lively Wit. It is the Infirmary of poor Spirits, to be taken with every Appearance, and dazled by every Thing that sparkles: But to pass by what the Generality of the World admires, and to be detain'd with nothing but what is most perfect and excellent in its Kind, speaks a superior Genius, and a true Discernment:

cernment: A new Picture by some meaner Hand, where the Colours are fresh and lively, will engage the Eye, but the Pleasure goes off with looking, and what we ran to at first with Eagerness, we presently leave with Indifference: But the old Pieces of *Raphael*, *Michael Angelo*, *Tintoret*, and *Titian*, though not so inviting at first, open to the Eye by Degrees; and the longer and oftener we look, we still discover new Beauties, and find new Pleasure. I am not, my Lord, a Man of so much Severity in my Temper, as to allow your Lordship to be pleased with nothing but what is in the last Perfection: For then, possibly, so many are the Infirmities of Writing, beyond other Arts, you never could be pleased. There is a wide Difference in being nice to judge of every Degree of Perfection, and rigid in refusing what-  
ever



ever is deficient in any Point. This would only be Weakness of Stomach, not any Commendation of a good Palate; a true Taste judges of Defects as well as Perfections, and the best Judges are always the Persons of the greatest Candor. They will find none but real Faults, and wherever they commend, the Praise is justly due.

I have intimated already, that a good Taste is to be formed by reading the best Authors, and when your Lordship shall be able to point out their Beauties, to discern the brightest Passages, the Strength and Elegance of their Language, you will always write your self, and read others by that Standard, and must therefore necessarily excel.

In *Rome*, my Lord, there were some popular Orators, who with a false Eloquence and violent Action carried away the Applause of the People;

People; and with us we have some popular Men, who are followed and admired for the Loudness of their Voice, and a false *Pathos*, both in Utterance and Writing: I have been sometimes in some Confusion to hear such Persons commended by those of superior Sense, who could distinguish, one would think, between empty, pompous, specious Harangues, and those Pieces in which all the Beauties of Writing are combined. A natural Taste must therefore be improved; like fine Parts, and a great Genius, it must be assisted by Art, or it will be easily vitiated and corrupted: False Eloquence passeth only where true is not understood, and no Body will commend bad Writers, that is acquainted with good.

These, my Lord, are only some cursory Thoughts on a Subject that will not be reduced to Rules. To  
treat

treat of a true Taste in a formal Method, would be very insipid; it is best collected from the Beauties and Laws of Writing, and must rise from every Man's own Apprehension and Notion of what he heareth and readeth.

It may be therefore of farther Use, and most Advantage to your Lordship, as well as a Relief and Entertainment to refresh your Spirits in the End of a tedious Discourse, if besides mentioning the Classic Authors as they fall in my Way, I lay before you some of the correctest Writers of this Age and the last, in several Faculties upon different Subjects: Not that your Lordship should be drawn into a servile Imitation of any of them, but that you may see into the Spirit, Force, and Beauty of them all, and form your Pen from those general Notions of Life and Delicacy,  
of

of fine Thoughts and happy Words, which rise to your Mind upon reading the great Masters of Style in their several Ways, and Manner of excelling.

I must beg Leave, therefore, to deferr a little the Entertainment I promised, while I endeavour to lead your Lordship into the true Way of *Imitation*, if ever you shall propose any Original for your Copy; or, which is infinitely preferable, into a perfect Mastery of the Spirit and Perfections of every celebrated Writer, whether ancient or modern.

That I may leave nothing material in this Argument unsaid, among the several Ways of *Imitation*, I shall take the Liberty of placing *Translation* and *Paraphrase*, as well as what we more strictly mean by *Imitating* an Author: And because none of these come up to what



what I would have your Lordship understand, I shall venture to give you my own Views of this Subject, which will appear perhaps in a different Light from any Thing hitherto advanced upon it.

By *Translation*, I mean the rendering a foreign Author into our native Tongue ; for I need not extend it to every Version from one Language to another.

The best Rules of *Translation* your Lordship will find in *Horace*, my Lord *Roscommon*, Mr. *Dryden*, and the present Duke of *Buckingham* ; and by acquainting your self with these excellent Writers, you will be best taught to judge when this Task is well perform'd.

*Translation* is a Province every body thinketh himself qualified to undertake, but very few are found equal to it : The mechanic Rules, the common Laws, which are to be

be observed, are very seldom obeyed; and sometimes a Translation may prove a very bad one, where these are more strictly regarded. Too scrupulous an Observation of Rules spoileth all Sorts of Writings. It maketh them stiff and formal; it betrayeth a weak and pedantic Genius, and such nice Writers are fitter to make *Transcribers* than *Translators*.

The first Qualification of a good *Translator* is an exact Understanding, and absolute Mastery of the Language he translateth *from*, and the Language he translateth *to*. Few Writers, in comparison of the Multitudes that crowd the Press, understand their Mother-Tongue; and among the more Learned I may venture to say, that several are better acquainted with the *Dead Languages* than the *Living*, and can write *Greek*, or *Latin*, or *Hebrew*,  
with

118 *Understanding the Languages.*  
with more Exactness than *English*.  
*English* in its full Purity, Elegance,  
and Perfection, lieth in a few Vo-  
lumes. The List of undisputed  
Masters is hardly so long as the List  
of the Court of Aldermen and  
Lieutenancy of our famous Metro-  
polis; and yet the Muster-Rolls of  
the Kingdom fall short of the Ca-  
talogue of our Authors.

What I mean by a perfect Un-  
derstanding and Mastery of Lan-  
guage, I have explained some Pa-  
ges back; but in *Translation* we  
must consider this Mastery of Lan-  
guage with respect to the Tongues  
we undertake; and we are not only  
required to understand our own,  
and a foreign Tongue, as Critics  
and Grammarians, we must not on-  
ly be perfect Masters of each se-  
parately, but we must more espe-  
cially study the Relation and Com-  
parison between them. In this do  
lie

*Comparing our own with others.* 119

lie the great Art and Difficulty of *Translating*; and not being able to reach the full Compass, the Differences, the Proprieties, and Beauties of one Language, is the Foundation of all faulty rendering into another.

And this Rule is to be observed not only with Regard to any Language in general, but also with special Reference to any Authors of it in particular. With Regard to any Language in general, we must, upon comparing it with our own, weigh all the Differences and Agreements between them, examine their several Qualities and Proprieties, and search into the Strength and Compass of one and the other, that we may see whether they be barren or abundant, close or diffuse, and how near they can be brought to one another. And among the several Writers in a foreign  
reign



reign Tongue, we must acquaint our selves with their several Characters, and different Manners: Whether they be copious or concise, flowing or restrained, plain or florid, and so on through all the Variety and Differences of Style; and then we are to consider how our Language will best answer the different Way and Manner of those Authors we propose to render. For if we hope to translate foreign Authors with Success, we must know perfectly how to extend and contract our Language, how to raise and adorn our Style, and how to write in the plainest and most simple Expressions.

Where a foreign Tongue is elegant and expressive, close and compact, beyond our Reach, we must study the utmost Force of our Language, and look out for Words as beautiful and comprehensive, as apt  
and

*Difference of Languages.* 121

and significant, as can be found, to render not only the Sense, but the Manner and very Expression of our Authors: Where the Language we translate from is more rich and copious than our own, we must try the utmost Compass and Variety of Expression to render an Author that aboundeth with Plenty, and Choice of Words to the same Sense, while perhaps we have but two or three that will answer to all the Variety of his. But if an Author be loose and diffuse in his Style, the Translator hath an easy Task, and needs only regard the Propriety of the Language; and his Translation may easily exceed the Original, if such Originals be worth translating.

By attending to these Considerations of the Difference of Languages with respect to each other, your Lordship will quickly enter into the whole Extent and Compass of them,

G

and

122 *Peculiarities and Propriety.*

and fully understand the utmost Reach and Strength of your native Tongue; what it is able to bear, and how far, and how well it is able to express the peculiar Manner, Beauty, and Propriety of any Authors whatsoever.

But there is still a greater Difficulty remaining upon Translators, which rises from the Peculiarities every Language hath to it self, that are so much the Character and Property of that Language, as not to be render'd or made common to any other. We have several beautiful Forms of Expression in *English*, which 'tis impossible for the most perfect and comprehensive Languages to reach; and the native Graces of every Tongue are such, as cannot be copied by Translation. When you change the Language, you lose the Beauty: The bare Construction and Carcass  
may

*Peculiarities and Propriety.* 123

may remain, but the Features and the Life are fled. When, therefore, you meet with any Expressions that will not be render'd without this Disadvantage, the Thing to be regarded, is the Beauty and Elegance of the Original; and your Lordship, without minding any thing but the Sense of the Author, is to consider how that Passage would be best expressed in *English*, if you were not tied up by the Words of the Original; and you may depend upon it, that if you can find a Way of expressing the same Sense as beautifully in *English*, you have hit the true Translation, though you cannot construe the Words backward and forward into one another; for then you certainly have translated as the Author, were he an *Englishman*, would have wrote: For if there be a beautiful Way of Expression pecu-



liar to the *Greeks* or *Romans*, which our Language cannot reach by any thing that can be termed a Translation with regard to rendering the Words; and if there be in our Language a Way of Expression peculiarly *English*, which giveth us the full Sense of the *Greek* or *Latin*, we do then truly translate, as we may presume the Authors would have wrote, and reach the Beauty as well as Sense of their Expressions, though the Words in *English* do by no means agree to the grammatical Construction of the Original.

But this Rule concerning those Beauties and Elegancies which are peculiar to every Language by it self, will be further explain'd, as I proceed to some other Observations necessary for *Translators*.

For, my Lord, we are as yet but in the Entrance. Understanding  
the

*Translations at second Hand.* 125

the Languages is no more than the Ground-work of Translation ; and being acquainted with the Force and Compass of foreign Tongues and our own, both as consider'd in themselves, and compared with each other, are Qualifications, which ought rather to be supposed, than required; and yet how few are there to be found even so far qualified for this Work? And how many among us have ventured upon *Translation*, without understanding the *Original*? To this, my Lord, are owing Translations at second Hand; and our Pretenders to Learning have made their small Knowledge of the *Modern* Tongues supply their Ignorance of the *Ancient*. What must we expect from those, who pretend to translate *Greek* and *Latin* from the *French*, for instance, but to find the *Translation* at double Distance from the *Original*? It

is impossible to see into the Excellencies and Perfections of those Languages through such a *Medium*, or at all to reach the Closeness and Expressiveness of the *Greek* and *Latin*, from a Language that must use five Words for one, and diffuse the Strength and Spirit of a single Page into ten. It is inconceivable with me how such *Translators* can be endured: It is certain they must be intolerable to those who are acquainted with the Originals; and no Account of their Acceptance can be given, but that there is so much Pleasure, Wit, and Beauty in the *Classics*, that 'tis impossible to translate them so ill, as utterly to deface them, and quite spoil the Entertainment they afford those who are Strangers to them in their native Tongue. Such Translations are like the Adulteration of the noblest Wines, where something of the

the Colour, Spirit, and Flavour, will remain; and while they please some injudicious Palates, do only raise the Indignation of every good Taste, to see the Spirit of the finest Authors so debased and corrupted. I do not pretend to judge of the *French Translations* my self: Be they what they will, ours, that are taken from them, must be bad. Nor am I Master enough of the *French* Tongue, to determine upon their Performances; but I speak after the best Judges, and the best Writers our Nation hath produced. The *French*, my Lord, have indeed taken worthy Pains to make Classic Learning speak their Language; and if they have not succeeded, it must be imputed to that Circumlocution, to a certain Talkativeness and Airiness that are represented in their Tongue, which will never agree with the *Silence*



and *Sedateness* of the *Romans*, or with the *Solemnity* and *Expressiveness* of the *Greeks*. Our *English*, of all *Modern Languages* that have been cultivated, is upon Experience and Comparison justly thought most capable of all the Beauty, Strength, and Significancy of the *Greek* and *Latin*; and we may justly hope to see the true *Greek* and *Roman Spirit* transfused into our Language, when the Translations are undertaken by such Hands as are every way equal to the Task. We have noble Specimens in the Translation of several celebrated Pieces; and if *Dryden* hath failed in some Parts of *Virgil*, we may in part ascribe it to his using, as 'tis said, some *French* and *Foreign Assistance*, and partly to some Defects of our Language, for he was an absolute Master of its whole Reach and Compass; but chiefly to the inimitable Per-

Perfections and Elegance of the Author, who hath weighed and chosen every Word that is most beautiful and significant, and best adapted to the Purpose it is used for. *Virgil* is not only the greatest and correctest of the *Roman* Poets, but of the *Roman* Writers; and as he is numerous, various, and rich in his Verse and Expressions, his Expressions are so full and abundant with his Sense, his Sense is so crowded, and yet so clear in the admirable Choice of his Words, that unless the *English* were equal to the *Roman*, and the *Translator* to the *Poet*, it is impossible but that the natural Disadvantages of our Tongue must appear in the Translation: And yet, my Lord, give me Leave to say, in Commendation of Mr. *Dryden*, let who will undertake that *Mighty Work*, we shall never see it better perform'd in the Whole;

and those who may excel him; where they observe he hath failed, will fall below him in a Thousand Instances where he hath excelled.

This, my Lord, I have only touched upon by the Way; and if the best and greatest Masters fail, what must we think of all meaner Translators? We can only sit down and wonder, that *Ogilby*, and his *Brethren* the *Ogilbies* of every Age, could ever find *Subscriptions* and Encouragement, or that Men of Sense should ever be induced to buy what they never could endure to read.

But it is Time to proceed to what is farther necessary to qualify a Man for Translation. Understanding the Languages he attempts as I have opened it, is no superficial easy Matter: I wish our Translators were only so far prepared for their Work: But, my Lord, I must farther

*Genius requir'd in Translators.* 131

farther observe, that those who only understand the Languages, are neither fit nor able to translate.

For it is not an exact Skill and Knowledge of the Languages alone, though this be a fundamental Qualification absolutely required in this Undertaking; but he that entereth upon this Province with any Hopes of Glory and Success, must, besides the Language, enter into the very Life, and Beauty, and Genius of his Author. With me it passeth for a Maxim, that no one can translate an Author, who can't write like him, and a Man must be of the same Spirit with the Author he attempteth. *Creech*, who translated *Lucretius* so well, miscarried in *Horace* as much as he succeeded in the other: And his *Idylliums* of *Theocritus* are as much below his *Manilius*, as the Fields are below the Stars. A Person that writeth



132 *Genius requir'd in Translators.*

like *Sallust*, or, to put the Opposition in the farthest Extream, like *Tacitus*, will hardly make a good Translator of *Livy*. Sir *Roger L'Estrange*, who was a perfect Master of the familiar, the facetious and jocular Style, fell into his proper Province, when he pitched upon *Erasmus* and *Æsop*. *Tully's* Offices were suitable enough for their Plainness and Familiarity to his Genius; but he could never rise to the Solemnity and Dignity of his Orations. He was neither Orator nor Historian, his Talent was Banter and Ridicule; and how well qualified he was for the Translation of *Josephus*, among a Thousand other Levities and low Expressions, we may judge from the Character of *Herod*, who was one *that would keep touch neither with God nor Man*, according to his Translation. Those who will venture upon Authors of  
different

different Ways, must be of a very comprehensive Genius, if they succeed. Every Man, who is a confessed Master in any Kind of Prose, or Poetry, may translate any Authors of the same Kind with Reputation: But it is an universal Genius that must attempt them all. Mr. *Prior* is equal to all the Parts of *Horace*, and may, at the same time, attempt *Homer* and *Virgil* with a Spirit not inferior to the great *Originals*. Mr. *Addison* seems peculiarly formed to maintain the Majesty of these great Poets, and assert the Character of his great Master *Virgil*, in an Exactness, Strength, and Beauty, like his own. My Lord *Hallifax* is a Name sacred to the Muses; and he that writeth with a *Classic* Spirit, may, when he pleases, make the ancient Poets speak, as if they wrote, and composed in *English*. Mr. *Granville*

*ville* I should call by a Title proper to his Name and Blood ; but a Regard to Chronology must make these Additions of a Piece with the rest, that no Confusion may happen to future Critics by the Mixture or Change of Titles: And whenever he shall adorn our Language with some of the noblest and choicest Pieces the *Greek* or *Roman* Poets have produced, I will venture to prophesy, that my Lord *Lansdown* will be as celebrated as Mr. *Granville*, and his Translations equal, what hardly any body but himself can do, his own Originals. Giving Warning once more, that these Additions are written above a Year and six Months after the first Edition, I will presume to mention another Gentleman, whose Writings I was not acquainted with when I first composed the Work that goeth before and followeth, and whose  
noble

noble Design I was a Stranger to when I made the Preface to this *Dissertation*. And this I do in the first Place, by way of Apology, for wanting so bright an Ornament in the List of our *English* Poets; and in the next Place, out of a charitable Regard to the Critics Heads, and my self, that they may not first crack their Brains to reconcile seeming Inconsistencies of Time, and then, for want of the true Discovery, condemn me for a Blunderer. So cautiously must he tread, who is afraid of being handled as they will handle him! And now, my Lord, after all this Preamble, I may venture to name Mr. *Pope*, whose Performances shine in all the Beauty and Perfections of the greatest Masters; and from his Hands we expect to receive the great *Homer* like himself.

These



136 *Difficulties of Translating.*

These Gentlemen, and such as these only, are qualified for Translation: It is the hardest Province in all the Parts of Writing; though none but a good Author can make a good Translator, yet it is more difficult to *translate* well, than to *write* well. Every great Master in Prose or Poetry is not able to translate every Author; and those Authors he finds most suitable to his own Genius, cost him more Sweat, and Pains, and Consideration, than twice the Number of Lines of his own composing. 'Tis no exceeding Labour for every great Genius to exert, and manage, and master his own Spirit; but 'tis almost an insuperable Task to compass, to equal, and command the Spirit of another Man. Yet this is what every Translator taketh upon himself to do, and must do, if he deserves the Name. He must put himself into  
the

*Difficulties of Translating.* 137

the Place of his Authors, not only be Master of their Manner, as to their Style, the Periods, Turn, and Cadence of their Writings, but he must bring himself to their Habit and Way of Thinking, and have, if possible, the same Train of Notions in his Head, which gave Birth to those they have selected and plac'd in their Works.

And now, my Lord, I can hardly forbear Expostulations upon this Head, that every idle, half-witted, half-learned *Noddle*, which the World is satisfied is not fit for an *Author*, should presently think *it self* well enough qualified for a *Translator*.

Let no one blame me for carrying my Notions of Translation so high; I have done it to rescue the Classics out of the Hands of every ignorant Pretender, that they may not be mangled and abused in their  
*Transmi-*

*Transmigration* from one Language to another: For, as if their Genius were changed, instead of being transferred, we are not so happy (pardon the Allusion) as to see a Lion's Spirit in an Ass's Body; but the Spirit of a Lion seems *Translated* into the Spirit of an Ass.

My Lord, the next Way of *Imitation* is *Paraphrase*. *Translation* is the nearest of all: 'Tis drawing immediately from the Life, and copying every Feature to all Advantage and Exactness: But *Paraphrase* holdeth the Original at a more distant View, and taketh as much Freedom to mend, or alter it, tho' it be not really either mended or alter'd for the better, as a Painter must, who would compliment a Lady of Fifty with a Face of Fifteen.

*Paraphrase*, my Lord, (strictly speaking) is enlarging upon an Author.

thor to explain his Meaning; but it is so confounded with *Periphrasis*, or Circumlocution, that 'tis hard to distinguish them: The first relates to Things, the other to Words; one gives the Meaning of an Author in the Way of Explication, the other multiplies Words without enlarging the Sense. I am obliged to distinguish them at my setting out, because, as I proceed, I must speak of them as if they were the same, and consider *Paraphrase* not as it is in it self, but as it stands in the present Practice; where, without regard to its original Design, it is changed into *Circumlocution*.

So much by way of Precaution, that none may triumph in their Criticisms upon a fancy'd Discovery, that the Author took *Paraphrase* and *Periphrase* for the same Thing, when the Fault lieth wholly in those versifying Gentlemen, who, without



out regarding either, have taken one for the other.

*Paraphrase* then, according to modern Usage, is a round-about Way of Translating, invented, I suppose, to help the Barrenness and Poverty, which Translators, overlooking in themselves, have apprehended in our Tongue. This hath opened a Way to many Irregularities, and greater Licentiousness than even Poets can claim; and though some Pieces of this Kind are admirably finished, yet those that are really good, are hardly enough to compensate for the bad. Some have had the Vanity to imagine they improved their Authors by the Liberties they took: But 'tis only their own Fondness and Conceit that puts such Fancies in their Head; for what they call Improvement, is generally either spinning out their Author's Sense till 'tis wire-drawn,

wire-drawn, that is, weak and slender; or else 'tis taking a Hint, and running away with a Notion that never enter'd into the Author's Thoughts. Our *Paraphrase* Men commonly take such a Compass about the Sense of their Authors, that they never come near it; or, if they chance to catch it, they never leave it till 'tis quite lost and dissipated. Nothing betrays the Weakness of their Heads so much as this Practice, and their Author's Sense is certainly too strong for their Brains, when they can't bear it without qualifying and mixing it with their own.

I know the general Pretence is avoiding a literal *Translation*; but there is a great deal of Difference between a literal *Translation* and a *Paraphrase*. A literal *Translation* is never to be avoided, but when it obscures or debases the Original;  
and

and a *Paraphrase* upon that Pretence ought never to be used, but when a literal *Translation* is impracticable. I remember *Horace's* Rule very well; and though there is no Necessity of *rendering Word for Word*, like some of your *faithful Translators*; yet, where the Language will bear it, and the Sense and Spirit of an Author can be fully expressed, I take the most literal *Translations* to be the best, as well as truest. It requires a great Genius, and a strong Judgment, to play with an Author's Sense, and run Divisions upon his Words. It may pass well enough if they were only to be set to Music, and even then 'twould be but weakening the Sense to improve the Sound.

If we will speak strictly of this Performance with Reference to the Poets especially, *Paraphrasing* is but another Word for *Translating*.

When

When the Language of the Original cannot be render'd in so many Words, or when a bare Translation cannot give the full Force and Beauty of the Original, we must take a Compass to express them as near as we can; and when we have so expressed them, the *Paraphrase* is indeed no more than the true *Translation*, according to the Observation I made upon rendering the *Peculiarities* of any Language, which holds in this Case as well as in that. But for farther Enterprizes upon an Author, for enlarging his Sense, and building Fancies of our own upon his Foundation, we may call it *Paraphrasing* if we will; but we should more properly term it *Changing*, or *Adding*, or *Patching*, or *Piecing*, or any thing but *Paraphrasing*: For generally it hath nothing within the *Etymology* of  
Pa-



144      *Pretences for it.*

*Paraphrase*, but being *besides the Meaning*.

As to the Pretences for this Practice, they are either improving the Author, or explaining his Meaning. As to the first, I have confuted it pretty well already, and shall only add, that the best Writers are above Improvement, such as *Virgil* and *Horace*, who yet have suffered most from this Vanity and Conceit; and that whatever Authors want to be improved, are not worthy to be Translated. As for the other Pretence, it is very just and fair, and the Experiment is at all Times allowable in the *Fragments*, and broken Pieces, and obscure Passages of ancient Poets, who cannot be understood without some Connection of Parts, some Supply of their Vacancies, and the Advantage of new Light, to guide us through the darker Passages of those Authors.

But

*Rules for Paraphrase.* 145

But here we are not at Liberty to treat these decayed, and broken, or dark Pieces of Antiquity, as we please: And the Rules of *Paraphrase* are the more strictly to be observ'd, the more we may seem to be left to our Discretion. 'Tis easy enough to keep up to our Author, when we have him always in View; but 'tis more difficult to trace him from his *Remains*, and pursue him through all the *Ruins* and *Obscurity* of Time. Now, " The  
" general Rules are, that all our  
" Sentiments do naturally rise from  
" our Author, and that we maintain his Character, and bring nothing of our own that is either  
" unlikely, or unworthy of him  
" to say.

Mr. *Cowley* hath succeeded admirably in his *Paraphrase* upon *Pindar*, but then he was of a Genius equal to his Author: He hath no

H Sentiment

Sentiment but what naturally rises from the Original, and is every way worthy the *Theban* Poet to have thought and sung. But 'tis a dangerous Enterprize, and too strong for weak Heads to try the Heights, and fathom the Depths of his Flights. The Rapidity of his Motion, the Torrent of his Verse, the sudden Turns and Sallies of his Thought, require a Genius like his own to pursue them, while shallow Brains grow giddy in a Moment, and the first Step carries them beyond their Depth, and hurries them down the Stream. *Horace*, hath given us fair Warning; and if any Dabler in Poetry dares venture upon the Experiment, he will only break his Brains, and give a *New Name* to *some Room* in *Bedlam*. I would intimate the same Caution with respect to all the other celebrated Masters of Antiquity, tho' their

their Sense doth not lie so deep, and their Flights are not so bold and violent as *Pindar's*, That our ordinary Adventurers in *Pindaric*, *Phrase*, and *Translation*, may have some Regard for their Reputation, if they have none for their Necks, and never bestride the Muses Horse, till they are sure they can keep their Seat, that is, till they can manage him with as much Strength and Dexterity as his old Masters; or, which is all one in plain *English*, till they can write up to the Dignity and Character of their Authors.

The Fragments and Remains of the Ancient Poets may be thought impracticable, and are perhaps too difficult for any Paraphrase to compleat, unless from the Hints we meet with, and the Character that is left us of the Authors. We could frame a Poem in Imitation



of their Way. *Horace* hath given us some short Notices of *Alcæus*, *Stesichorus*, *Simonides*, *Sappho*, and *Archilockus*: And we meet with some farther Mention, and some Fragments of them all, except *Alcæus*, in *Longinus's* excellent Treatise. Their Remains have been collected by learned Men; and if here and there we find some Pieces more entire, we must from them endeavour to acquaint ourselves with their Way and Manner, and imitate them as well as we can, when we take Occasion from some broken Parts to fancy what the Poet said in the Lines that are lost. As your *Antiquaries* make out the most ancient *Medals* from a Letter, and some Pieces of Letters, that are here and there with great Difficulty to be discerned upon the *Face* and *Reverse*.

But

But with Respect to all other Poets, whose Works have descended entire to their Posterity, and whose Writings can be understood without supplying either new Light or Connexion, I hope all that pretend to be of the Poetical Family, will have the Modesty to think reverently of their Fore-fathers, and suffer them to rest in the quiet Possession of their own Wit and Beauty, without Addition or Diminution. *Translate* they may; and where *Translation* is impracticable, they may *Paraphrase*: But it is intolerable, that under a Pretence of *Paraphrasing* and *Translating*, a Way should be suffer'd of treating Authors to a manifest Disadvantage, only for the Sake of gratifying the vitiated Taste and foolish Fancies of some Poetafters, that fondly dream they can write better than the best Writers in the World.

After so many Words upon *Translation* and *Paraphrase*, let us pass, if your Lordship pleases, to what is more properly meant by *Imitation*.

“ This, in general, is no more  
“ than proposing some excellent  
“ Writer for a Pattern, and endeavouring to copy his Perfections  
“ in the most distinguishing Parts  
“ of his Character.” Among the *Romans*, *Horace* is the Standard of *Lyric*, and *Virgil* of *Epic* Poetry; and those Moderns who could ever flatter themselves to succeed in either, have proposed these great Masters with old *Homer* and the *Grecian Lyrics* for their Pattern. If they wrote after *Horace* and *Virgil* in *Latin*, they studied their Expression as well as Thought; if in their native Tongue they have formed themselves as near as possible upon those great Models. I remember

member no Writer that ever pleased himself with any distant Attempts of the *Epic* Kind, but he gave us, at least, the Sketch, the Skeleton, the Draught, the Mechanism, whatever we call it, of *Homer* and *Virgil*, and you might see the Anatomy of those Poems, if you could see nothing else. For *Lyrics*, I cannot take upon my self to recollect above one Person who ever ventured upon them, without having *Horace*, or the *Grecians*, in his Eye ; and he hath carefully preserved the Modern Distinction between *Songs* and *Odes*, as if they were as distant in Meaning, as they are in Sound and Him. I might instance farther in the *Epistolary* and *Satyrical* Way, in *prose* as well as *Verse*, in *Greek* as well as *Latin*, in *Orators* and *Historians*, in *Philosophers* and *Moralists*, in every thing but your *Critics* and *Commen-*



*tators*: For I think no body ever thought it worth while to mind either the Elegance of their Style, or the Brightness of their Thoughts: But I spare your Lordship the Trouble, and my self the Labour of going through the Subject in every Particular. It will be more pleasing, and I hope as profitable, to run it over in some general Reflections.

And I would in the first Place reflect upon a Way of *Imitation* I can by no Means admit of, and that is adapting *Ancient Authors* to *Modern Times*, and making *Horace*, *Juvenal*, *Persius*, &c. not only speak our Language, but know our Manners. I am sensible Mankind is the same in all Ages: The same Vanity, Villainy, and Folly, are always to be found, and the same Correction may expose the Knaves and Fools of one Age as well as another;

another; but this Fancy must not presently pass for *Imitation*. These Sort of Performances are, generally speaking, as *Faithful Translations* as any, only *Modern Names* are inserted in the Place of the *Ancient*, and nothing is changed but the Scene and the Actors: I have no Quarrel to the Practice; it may be to the *English* Reader a more diverting and more useful Way of Translating.

I cannot help taking Notice of another Way of *Imitation*, which, if I had a Mind to be formal, I should say, differeth from the former, as *Paraphrase* from *Translation*. Your Lordship shall never take a Voyage, but if you have a Poet of your Acquaintance, he will compliment you, as all Lords have been complimented upon the like Occasion, with *Horace's* good Wishes to his Friend *Virgil*: And it

154 *Remarks on Imitation.*

will be a great Chance, if he prove too strict an *Imitator*, and doth not consider his Compass, but he prayeth for a Wind in your Teeth. Perhaps he may not wonder at the Hardiness of the Man who first ventured to Sea, and may spare those fine Reflections *Horace* maketh on the Folly and Rashness of Mankind; and instead of such Digressions, may only wish your Lordship well Home again: But for that, my Lord, he may, when Time comes, do as he pleaseth; only I cannot allow one Way or the other for a proper *Imitation*, whether he follows *Horace* quite through, or leaveth him at his Digression; and my Reasons are at hand, as soon as I have given one Instance more. I believe no King hath been out of the Land since writing of *Odes* came in Fashion; but he hath been intreated Home in the same Prayers

ers *Horace* used to *Augustus*. I remember very well, the *Ode* I speak of was frequently imitated in King *William's* Days, though the Compliment was unluckily spoiled: For putting *France* in the Room of *Parthia*, *Scythia*, and *Germany*, I may venture to say, for his Majesty's Honour, that we had less Reason to fear the *French* when he was *Abroad*, than when he was at *Home*.

These *Odes* I have mention'd, may, perhaps, be held at some farther Distance in the *Translation* or *Paraphrase*, than other Pieces that are adapted to our Times: But still they are no more *Imitations*, than it can be an *Imitation* to say the same Thing in Effect in *English* which the Poet had expressed so much better in *Latin*. It is all the while treading too closely in his Steps; and though by a Figure we



156 *Remarks on Imitation.*

call *Imitating Transcribing*, yet he that *transcribeth* and calleth it *Imitation*, will be called, if not a *Transcriber*, a *Plagiary*. In moral and in christian Virtues, we ought to *transcribe*, or *imitate* such illustrious Examples as have gone before us: But by this is not understood an Imitation of their particular Actions, but of their Virtues in general. And so I say for an Author, it is not tying ourselves up to the Circumstances of his Thoughts and Expressions, it is not adapting his Occasion of Writing to ours, or ours to his; but it is copying after his Beauties, his Way and Manner at large, that maketh the *Imitation*. Suppose one of these *Imitators* I have been speaking of should propose to *imitate Horace* in *Latin* upon one of these Occasions, I believe he would not think fit to transcribe the *Ode*; and  
why

why should putting it into *English* pass for *Imitation*, when transcribing it only with the necessary Alterations would be intolerable. In Actions I may imitate the best Men punctually, if I can, though I am not obliged to do so: For Actions are of common Concern, and any one may do what another hath done: But Writings are a Property; and while I pretend to *imitate*, I must take Care not to *steal*. Writing an *Ode* upon the same Subject and Occasion, as *Horace* hath done, is so far an Imitation of him, but taking his Plan, and borrowing his Thoughts, is making too free with him to call it *Imitation*. And yet, in the common Way, we either write out of him, and so pretend to *imitate* him, or out of our own Fancies, and so do not *imitate* him at all. But to come off from these grave Disquisitions, my Lord, I  
would

158 *Remarks on Imitation.*

would clear the Point by one Instance more, which, I think, will put it out of all Dispute. There is a certain *Ode* wherein *Horace* is pleased to hold a Dialogue with an old Acquaintance called *Lydia*. This *Ode* hath, I fancy, escaped no body that ever attempted any: It hath been *translated*, *paraphrased*, and *imitated* by a Hundred Hands; and I dare venture a Wager, that when all the *Translations*, *Paraphrases*, and *Imitations*, are compared together, strip them only of their Titles at Top, it will puzzle a good Critic to define which is *Imitation*, *Paraphrase*, or *Translation*, provided always, that *Strephon* and *Cloe*, or the Names of any other Nymphs and Swains, be only understood as the *English* for *Horace* and his Friend *Lydy*.

If *Horace* himself had been called upon to add a *fifth* Book of  
*Odes*

*From the Example of Horace.* 159

Odes to the *fourth* (for I do not speak of his *Epodes*) as he was commanded by *Augustus* to add a *fourth* to the *third*, he would doubtless have *imitated* his former Pieces, and the youngest Child had carried the same Resemblance of the Father, which could be found in any of its elder Brethren: But he never would have copied from any of his old Pieces, nor fancied, that when the same Occasion offered, the same Verses, with some little Alteration, and the same Thoughts, with another Application, would have served: The Subject of the *Ode* might be the same, but his Method of treating it would be different: He would write indeed like himself; you should know it to be *Horace's* Production; and so far he would *imitate* himself: “ You should see  
“ the same Way and Manner, the  
“ same Beauty and Sprightliness of  
“ Thought,



160 *From the Example of Horace.*

“ Thought, the same agreeable  
“ Mixture of the Serious and Jo-  
“ vial, the same Fineness of Re-  
“ flection, the same Wisdom in  
“ Mirth, and Morality in his Plea-  
“ sures, all cloathed in the same  
“ Ease and Elegance of Words, in  
“ the same *curious Felicity* of Ex-  
“ pression, which do altogether  
“ make up the distinguishing Cha-  
“ racter of his *Odes*.

To *imitate Horace* then, is to write as himself would have done upon the same Occasions, on which we propose him to Imitation. We must have the same Turn of Thought, the same Faculty of Expression, and, in a Word, the same Genius with himself.

I might instance in the other great Masters of Antiquity, and fix the Laws of Imitation from the Practice of the *Roman* Orators and Poets, in copying from the *Greek*.  
*Tully,*

*Tully*, in his *Orations*, formed himself upon the *Grecian* Models, and as he declares under the Person of *Crassus*, he improved the *Roman* Language by translating, explaining, and imitating the best *Orations* of their greatest *Orators* in the best and choicest Expressions, and found this Advantage in *Imitation*, that he often adopted the *Grecian* Language into his own so happily and so clearly, with that peculiar Turn, that the Words should appear new, yet not unusual, but very fit and proper to his Auditors.

If your Lordship would know what *Tully* means by *Imitation*, he acquaints us with his Sentiments of it in the Person of *Antonius*. “That  
 “ we consider well in the first Place  
 “ what Authors are worthy our  
 “ *Imitation*: That we regard the  
 “ chiefest Excellencies of the Au-  
 “ thors

“ thors we would *imitate*: That by  
 “ frequent Practice and Exercita-  
 “ tions, we form them, as it were,  
 “ within us: That we do not, like  
 “ some *Imitators*, copy the easiest  
 “ Parts, or even the most glaring  
 “ and notorious Passages, which  
 “ are none of the finest, or most  
 “ correct, and so fall into the Vi-  
 “ ces and Singularities of our Au-  
 “ thors: Then he runs through  
 “ the several Authors of several  
 “ Ages, gives us a short Character  
 “ of them as he goes along, and  
 “ shews the Practice of *Imitation*  
 “ to have been formed upon the  
 “ Taste of every Age, and the Man-  
 “ ner of the most celebrated Mas-  
 “ ters in their several Times.

I have not troubled my self, nor  
 would I trouble your Lordship with  
 formal Citations: I have only made  
 an Extract of *Tully's* Sense so far  
 as relates to the Subject now be-  
 fore

fore me. To the *Orator* I will only add the great *Grammarians*, and give *Quintilian's* Sentiments in few Words: " That *Imitation* is not so  
 " much copying after, or trying to  
 " resemble another Author in his  
 " Conceptions and Style, as an E-  
 " mulation plainly to rival him in  
 " his own Way, and to excel him  
 " where he hath most excell'd.

*Quintilian's* Rule is, *not* to propose any one Author for our Pattern, but to set before us the several Excellencies of the most excellent Writers: And *Tully* requires *not* the Carcass and Skeleton, *not* the pale and languid Looks of an Author, but to see the Nerves and Sinews express'd, and the Blood and Spirits, the Colour, Strength, and Juices, transfused in the Imitation.

This *be* most happily attain'd, and executed, and by observing these Rules, the great Imitators of  
 others



164 Plato, Terence, &c.

others became Originals themselves. For to confirm your Lordship in these Notions; *Plato* in Prose is the *Imitator* of *Homer's* Diction in Verse; not of his poetical Fancies, but of the Copiousness, the Majesty, and Loftiness of his Style. In *Latin*, *Terence* imitated *Menander*, yet not as a *Transcriber*, or *Translator*, but so as to raise a new Fa-  
brick with the old Materials. *Horace* hath imitated the *Grecian Ly-  
rics*, and mixed (as I have said) the  
soft, the amorous, the jovial, with  
the grave and sublime. *Virgil* too,  
he is an *Imitator* of the *Grecians*,  
of *Theocritus* in his *Pastorals*, *He-  
fiod* is hardly worth mentioning  
with his *Georgics*; but above all, he  
is the professed *Imitator* of *Homer*,  
out of whose Poems he hath form-  
ed a *Third*, distinct from *either*, and  
more perfect than *Both*.

I have

I have said enough of *Virgil* in the Beginning of the Book; and what I have here added concerning him and others, is only to give such Examples of *Imitation* as will best instruct us what *Imitation* is; and when we can do the same Justice to the *Roman*, as they have done to the *Grecian* Writers; when, without stealing from them, we can plainly rival them in their own Thoughts and Expression, and tell the same Story, or write upon the same Subject, better than they have done; then we may propose them for our Patterns, and undertake them upon any Occasion we please, keep the Originals in our View, and profess to *imitate* them without *Translating* from them, or *Paraphrasing* on them, or *Transcribing* them into *Modern* Names and Places.

“ This

“ This then is *Imitation*, when  
“ we are possessed of the Expres-  
“ sion, Way of Thinking, and the  
“ Genius of any Author, in such an  
“ abstracted Manner, as without  
“ writing out of him, or making  
“ use of him for particular Thoughts  
“ and Phrases, we can write in his  
“ Way, and after his Manner; so  
“ that any one, who is a proper  
“ Judge, may say at Sight, *This is*  
“ *Horatian*, *this is Terentian*, *this*  
“ *is Virgilian*; though perhaps the  
“ very Words, as they stand in our  
“ Writings, are not to be found  
“ in the Authors we propose to imi-  
“ tate.

I have said little concerning *Imi-  
tation*, with respect to the Language  
of the Original, because I think it  
extreamly difficult to *imitate* the  
*Greeks* and *Romans* in their own  
Tongue with any Hopes of Success,  
it being impossible for us at this  
Dis-

*Of Imitating the Language.* 167

Distance to be Masters of their Language in any Degree equal to themselves. Instead, therefore, of laying down fruitless Rules in an impracticable Point, I have rather thought fit to advance a Notion, that may seem particular, as a Reason for declining this Part of *Imitation*: And because I would not be both singular and positive, I would beg Leave to consider the *Difficulties* of *Modern Writers in imitating ancient Language*. These Difficulties arise partly from the Diversity of the Tongues, and partly from the Remoteness of Time. As to the first, we are sensible that Diversity of the Language is no insuperable Difficulty. Modern Writers of different Nations may succeed in each others Tongues. The *English* may write *French*; the *French* *English*; the *Spaniard* *Italian*; and the *Italian* *Spanish*, and  
*either*



168 *The Difficulties of it.*

*either other* with equal Purity and Perfection; and the Reason is, these being *Living* Languages, a Man, by Study and Conversation, especially if trained up (as we are in *Greek* and *Latin*) from the Cradle, may come to an absolute Mastery. The greatest Difficulty lies in the Distance of Time, where the Languages are *Dead*, the Books clos'd, the Standard fix'd to a few Authors in several Kinds; beside the *Obscurity* that is brought over them by the Course of *Ignorance* and *Age*, made yet more *obscure* by their *pedantical Elucidators*. But, setting these aside, I would consider the Ancient as *Dead* Languages only, and take the Difficulty of *Imitation* in that single Respect.

Not to be tedious therefore in the Close of this Article, let us propose *Horace* for one Instance, instead of others, who is every where, in his  
*Odes*

*Odes* especially, so curious and choice in his Expressions, that in *imitating* him, it hath been always *sacred* to *imitate* his Diction. We have indeed the Purity and Propriety of his Language, the Result of all his Judgment and Corrections; and this may seem an Advantage to us upon any Imitation of him: But I think it, for that very Reason, a manifest Disadvantage, and a great Restraint upon us; for we are tied up to a Sett, or Catalogue of Phrases, and are oblig'd to form all our different Combinations of Words, to express ten Thousand Differences of Thought out of those which he has selected to express his own Thoughts upon his own Subjects. He had the whole Compass of the *Roman* Tongue to range in, all the Riches and Variety of that Language before him, and ten Thousand

Words were present to his Mind ; out of which he chose the best and fittest for his Purpose: And had he attempted another Book of *Odes*, without tying himself up, and perhaps without repeating any one Expression of his former, he might have given us another of the same Strain and Resemblance with the rest. For he could form infinite Combinations of Words in the same Way and Manner; whereas we, who would *imitate* his Diction, are confined to his Authority, and his own Books contain all the Language we must use: For which Reason the Imitation is too near, and the Thoughts themselves, from the very Necessity of the Expression, too much the same. When all is done, where we propose to *imitate*, we are too apt to *transcribe*, and in some *Odes*, which I have seen happily accomplish'd without

*Consider'd as to Horace.* 171

without regarding *Horace* farther than his Expression, where the Subject hath been new, and the Thoughts entirely different, the Expression being *Horatian*, and not originally designed to express those Thoughts it is applied to, hath seemed too much constrained, and to have wanted that Easiness, that Freedom and Liberty, which are peculiar to *Horace*.

The Use I would make of this Remark, if it be of any Moment, is, that in order to *imitate* the *Ancients* with Success, we should observe the *Romans* in their *Imitations* of the *Greeks* in this Point of Language which is now under debate; And then, in Conformity to the *Roman* Conduct, we shall never attempt to write in *Greek* or *Latin* with any Hopes of coming up to the celebrated Authors in those Languages, but content our selves



with Writing in *English*, and rivaling them in their finest Pieces, by the Advantage of our native Tongue joined to our Skill and Mastery of theirs. For whatever Compositions *Horace, Virgil, Tully*, or any professed Admirers and Imitators of the *Greeks* might have made in that Language, it is certain they never thought fit to leave any of those Pieces behind them. How well soever they understood the *Greek* Tongue, they used their own in *Imitation*, though they improved upon their Authors, they would not rival them in their Language; they preferred Writing *well* in their *own* Tongue, to Writing *not so well* in *another*, and were content to shew the *Grecian* Beauties in a *Roman* Dress. This Observation of their Practice, is with me of so great Authority, that I think it the greatest Presumption to attempt the  
*Ancients*

*Ancients* in their own Language, under the many Disadvantages we must lie, and particularly these two, the Necessity of falling much below them at the best, and in coming too near them in the *Letter*, though we cannot reach them in the *Spirit* of their Expression. I need not display the Advantages of using our own Tongue rather than theirs: We may only look into the *Roman* Writers, and find, that the *Greek* was none of their Concern; they studied it as *Scholars*, but would never use it as *Authors*; they enrich'd and enlarg'd the *Latin* with Supplies from the *Grecian* Store; and by writing in their own Tongue, they could equal and excel; whereas, in the *Grecian*, they must have fallen short of the Originals they proposed to *Imitation*. And if we will take upon us to *imitate Horace* in his own Tongue,

174 *Our own Tongue recommended,*  
however some few Poets of the  
same Genius, and by a perfect  
Mastery of his Language, may suc-  
ceed in a few Attempts of this Na-  
ture, as we have some *Specimens* a-  
mong our selves in the *Musæ Angli-  
canæ*; the Generality of such En-  
terprizes would certainly fail, and  
the greatest Masters themselves,  
that have raised their Reputation  
by a few *Odes* admirably finish'd,  
would certainly ruin it, should they  
attempt to rival *Horace* in the Num-  
ber, as well as in the Perfection of  
his Pieces. Were all the *Odes* of  
all the Modern Masters in this Way  
collected, they might be comprised  
in a less Volume than those of the  
*Roman* Poet; and every Genius of  
every Nation must be called in for  
Assistance, if ever we intend the  
World should see a Sett of *Odes*  
not inferior to *Horace* in Number  
and Reputation.

I am

*From the Success of our Writers. 175*

I am under no Necessity of disputing the Excellency of the *Latin* and *English* Tongues in Comparison with one another. I will easily yield the Preference to the *Latin*; only give me Leave to say, that we must certainly write better in the *Living* Language than the *Dead*; and of our most celebrated Poets, particularly Mr. *Cowley*, the most celebrated in both, I may affirm, their *English* Works are much preferable to their *Latin*. I have instanced in Mr. *Cowley*, the rather, because none wrote more Masterly in *Latin*, and no Poet was less curious in the Words and Cadence of his Verse in *English*: His Words flowed rather from Nature than Art; and where they appear most to be studied, they appear at the same time to be most affected, as when he endeavours to please too much. I speak not this in the Way



176 *From the Success of our Writers,*  
of Censure on this admirable Poet ;  
I take his Carelessness of his Numbers to be an Argument of his Genius, which was too great to attend to the minuter Parts of a Composition, and he was sure to please with all his Faults. But how negligent soever he seems in his *English* Pieces, he was as careful in his *Latin* ; and though he wrote *Latin* Verse in all Kinds the best of any Man of his Age, yet his *English* Writings, with all the Defects the Critics have surmised, are superior to his *Latin*. *Milton* I may also add ; and besides him, I do not readily call to mind another of their Age, that hath wrote much in *Latin* as well as *English* ; and his *Paradise Lost*, as in all other Respects, so particularly in the Language, excelleth whatever his Pen hath left us of his *Latin* Pieces. The excellent Mr. *Addison* is indeed an  
Ex-

Exception, and it is hard to judge whether his *English* or *Latin* Pieces are more perfect in their Kind.

Indeed I am so far from having a mean Opinion of our Language, even when it is compared with the *Greek* and *Roman*, that though I may yield them the Preference upon Comparison, I may nevertheless venture to say, that we can write better in our own Language than theirs, and that our Originals may be as difficult for them to translate, or imitate, as theirs are to us, supposing, my Lord, some of the old Bards were alive again. Our Language, perhaps, is not so copious and comprehensive as the *Greek*, nor so significant and elegant as the *Latin*; and perhaps it is not capable of that Delicacy and Happiness for which *Horace*, the Instance we had before us, is so celebrated; but let us try the utmost that our Lan-

178 *A Caution to Pindaric Writers.*

guage is able to perform ; and then, if we can reach *Horace* in his Thoughts, we shall not fall much below him in our Words.

In *Imitations* of the *Lyric Poetry* there is one Caution to be observed, which I have partly intimated already, in censuring that loose and libertine Way of *Paraphrasing* I have just taken Notice of; and that is, in Writing *Odes*, nay, *Pindarics* themselves, how lawless soever that Word may sound, we should set some Bounds to our Fancy, and some Laws to our Verse. 'Tis not my Purpose, and it does not fall within my Subject, to lay down the Rules of *Odes* and *Pindarics*; they may be learn'd from the Examples of the *Ancients*, and some short Notices of the *Moderns*. I would only give a Check to that monstrous Custom, which hath prevailed in this Kind of Composition,

fition, of writing perfectly at Random, and running from one Thing to another in unequal Stanza's, and unequal Measures, as if the Licentiousness of the Metre was brought to justify the Licentiousness of the Imagination. This Way of Writing indulges *Transitions* more, perhaps, than any other: But the Beauty of *Odes* doth by no Means consist in *Transitions*, and the Beauty of *Transitions* themselves lieth in their being natural, and maintaining a secret Correspondence with all the other Parts from the Beginning to the End. Nay, I will venture to affirm, that where the *Transition* passeth entirely to another Subject, and the Author never returns to the first Occasion of the *Ode*, it must rise out of something that went before, which gave the Hint, and introduced it into the Poet's Mind. But I am going out of my



180 *Celebrated Authors in Divinity.*

Province, and transgressing in the very Instance of *Transition*, Your Lordship will pardon me, if I only plead, that I would not have our *Modern* Poets, under a Pretence of *imitating* the *Ancients*, give themselves such *Airs*, and such a Loose in *Lyrics*, as if there were no Numbers, no Measure, no Connection in the World.

After so much hath been said of Imitation in the several Kinds and Degrees under which it may be considered, we may venture to look upon the Authors themselves, and the Subject of their Works. History, Poetry, and Divinity, have been the distinguishing Parts of our Writings; and I will be bold to give this general Character of our Writers in them, that they only fall short of the Graces and Beauties of the *Ancients*.

Divinity,

Divinity, my Lord, is the just Boast and Glory of *England*. I need not say, that our Writers have excelled in Soundness of Doctrine, Exactness of Method, and Clearness of Reasoning, but they have excelled also in the Simplicity and Elegance of their Style, in Brightness of Thought, and Beauty of Expression.

The famous *Tillotson* is all over natural and easy in the most unconstrained and freest Elegancy of Thoughts and Words: His Course, both in his Reasoning and his Style, like a gentle and an even Current, is clear and deep, and calm and strong. His Language is so pure; no Water can be more; it floweth with so free, uninterrupted a Stream, that it never stoppeth the Reader or it self. Every Word possesseth its proper Place; we meet no hard, unusual, mean, far-fetched, or over-strained.

182 *Bishop of Rochester.*

ver-strained Expression: His Diction is not in the naked Terms of the Things he speaks of, but rather metaphorical; yet so easily are his Metaphors transferred, that you would not say they intrude into another's Place, but that they step into their own.

The Bishop of \* *Rochester* is the correctest Writer of the Age, and comes nearest to the great *Originals* of *Greece* and *Rome*, by a studious Imitation of the Ancients: His Plainness and Accuracy, his Sublime and Oratory, are equally laboured: His *Life of Cowley*, and his excellent *Discourse* to his *Clergy* are admirable for the Modesty and Plainness, and inimitable Simplicity of their Dress. His Answer to *Sorbiere* is so handsome a Way of exposing an empty, trifling, pre-

\* *Sprat.*

tending

*Bishop of Rochester.* 183

tending Pedant, the Wit so lively, the Satyr so courtly, and so severe, and his Address in maintaining the Honour of our Countrey so masterly and accomplish'd, that he maketh his Adversary a ridiculous Thing, too inconsiderable for our Anger, at once the Subject of our Diversion and Contempt: His Letters to my Lord *Dorset* are the best Patterns of Apology, and a true Epistolary Style on a publick Subject: His Sermons are truly fine, so very beautiful, and so extreamly studied in every bright Thought, and delicate Expression, and all the Charms of Language, that Religion looketh lovely like her self, as well as venerable in our Eyes.

I have been induced by the Pleasure that remaineth on my Mind from Reading, to forget that I was mentioning him only as a Divine, but every Thing from his Pen is in  
such



such Perfection, that 'tis of Advantage to your Lordship, wherever I introduce him.

I will only add what is more than can be said of *Tully*, in the Bishop we meet the Poet and the Orator, eminently conjoined.

Mr. *Duke* may be also mentioned under the double Capacity of a *Poet* and a *Divine*. He is a bright Example in the several Parts of Writing, whether we consider his *Originals*, his *Translations*, *Paraphrases*, or *Imitations*: But here I can only mention him as a *Divine*, with this peculiar Commendation, that in his Sermons, besides Liveliness of Wit, Purity and Correctness of Style, and Justness of Argument, we see many fine Allusions to the Ancients, several beautiful Passages handsomely incorporated in the Train of his own Thoughts: And

to say all, in a Word, *Classic Learning*, and a *Christian Spirit*.

I did not care to meddle with Dr. *South*, while he lived, and it is difficult to speak of him, now he is dead. But my Opinion having been demanded of his Writings, I must needs say, that his Character is harder to draw than his Countenance. So very beautiful are his Writings, that in them we find all the Riches of the most luxuriant Fancy corrected, and disposed by the most absolute Judgment: Elegance and Exactness meet in all Parts of his Works, and at the same Time, when his Argument requires it, we have the Closeness and Severity of the Schools. The Learning and Researches of a Commentator, but with the Life and Spirit of an Author. There is one Sort of Wit, which is judged too light, another too bitter and cruel for the Pulpit,

Pulpit, and what is disputed of *Horace*, may be truly decided of him, that his Discourses are both Sermons, and Satires together. He was the brightest Genius, the fondest Scholar, the most consummate Divine, the last Age hath bred: His Faults were purely humane, derived from his Temper and Constitution, and occasioned by the Provocations he had received from the Villainy and Hypocrisy of those godly Times and People, which he never mentioneth without a Lash of his Resentment.

Your Lordship must not take the Value of the Writers from the Order I name them in. It is not my Office to fix their Precedency. Dr *Moss* was one of the best Preachers of the Age, and another admirable Instance of the Use that is to

\* Late Dean of *Ely*.

be

*Dr. Smalridge, Dr. Stanhope.* 187  
be made of Classics, without pretending to Critics and Commentators, by mastering the genuine Spirit, and native Beauty of his Authors. He makes them subservient to Religion, and consecrates them to the Service of God.

In *Dr. \* Smalridge* are reconciled all the Beauties of Language to the Severity of Argument: His Method and Reasoning are absolute upon the Points he treats of: His Style is clear and elegant, just and manly; he ennobleth his Classic Learning, and raiseth his Eloquence by the Majesty and Beauty of the Scripture Language.

The late Dean of † *Canterbury* is excellent in the whole. His Thoughts and Reasoning bright and solid. His Style is just, both for the Purity of Language, and for

\* Late Bishop of *Bristol*. † *Dr. Stanhope*.

Strength



188 D. Adams, B. Fleetwood,  
Strength and Beauty of Expression ;  
but the Periods are formed in so  
peculiar an Order of the Words,  
that it was an Observation, No Bo-  
dy could pronounce them with the  
same Grace and Advantage, as him-  
self.

Dr. *Adams* wrote in a most abun-  
dant, free, and flourishing Style,  
equally rich in Thought, and hap-  
py in Expression.

Bishop \* *Fleetwood's* Softness and  
Bishop † *Blackball's* Plainness, are  
their Characters: Excellent Writers  
both !

The late Bishop of ‡ *Chester*  
hath shewed the World, that me-  
taphysical Reasoning, and good Lan-  
guage, are truly consistent, and that  
Writings may at the same Time be  
very *abstracted*, and very *clear*. He

\* Late of *Ely*.

† Late of *Exon*.

‡ Dr. *Gasrell*.

perfectly

*D. Gastrell, D. Dawes, D. Sharp.* 189  
perfectly knew how to expose and  
ridicule our Infidels with Wit, as  
well as to confute them with Ar-  
guments; and hath happily con-  
vinced the World that they are Pro-  
digies in nothing but Unbelief and  
Absurdities.

The most reverend \* Metropo-  
litan his Predecessor, was a perfect  
Orator in his Elocution, and those  
sacred Strains, which carry their  
own Reason, and Conviction with  
them, were irresistible in the Charms  
and Power of his Delivery.

And here I may justly add the  
good † *Archbishop* who went before  
him; a Person truly excellent in  
all the Perfections of good Writing,  
Goodness, Fervour, Strength, and  
a true Spirit of Piety, run through  
his various Compositions in plain,  
unaffected Majesty of Style.

\* *Sir W. Dawes.*

† *Dr. Sharp.*

With

With the good Archbishop, I must join the late learned and venerable Bishop of St. *Asaph*, Dr. *Beveridge*, who hath deliver'd himself with those Ornaments alone, which his Subject suggested to him, and hath written in that Plainness and Solemnity of Style, that Gravity and Simplicity, which give Authority to the sacred Truths he teacheth, and unanswerable Evidence to the Doctrines he defendeth. There is something so great, primitive, and apostolical, in his Writings, that it creates an Awe and Veneration in our Mind: The Importance of his Subjects is above the Decoration of Words, and what is great and majestic in it self, looketh most like it self, the less it is adorned. The true Sublime in the great Articles of our Faith, is lodged in the plainest Words. The Divine Revelations are best expressed  
in

in the Language they were revealed in, and as I observed before of the Scriptures, they will suffer no Ornament or Amendment.

But then your Lordship will observe, that the Practice of Virtue and all moral Duties, admit of all the Powers of humane Wit and Eloquence; where we are to persuade as well as teach, where we are to engage the Will, as well as inform the Understanding; 'tis our Business to try all the Beauties and Charms of Words, and with all the Force of Oratory to prevail with Men to practise what they own to be their Duty. For Conviction of the Truth, we find by Experience, is not enough, unless the Will and Affections be won over to its Side.

I have troubled your Lordship with these great Men, not that I think you will ever write Sermons, but that you may judge of the Writers;



ters; and as far as their Style may be proper on other Subjects, they are able to give you a true Taste, and a right Turn of solid and fine Writing.

Your Lordship, however, may on many Occasions write as a Christian, though not as a Divine; and whether your Pen shall delight in Poetry or Prose, the Subjects you may choose, and the Thoughts which are natural to every sacred Theme, are so far exalted above the Heathen Poetry or Philosophy, that the meanest Christian, however he may fail in Diction, is able to surpass the noblest Wits of Antiquity in the Truth and Greatness of his Sentiments.

Let me only propose a *Christian Orator*, and compare him with the Orators of *Greece* and *Rome*, to shew your Lordship the Advantages we are possessed of, and how  
greatly

greatly we may excel. If your Lordship reads the Topics of *Aristotle* and *Tully*, and will observe how all their Arguments are formed upon the Circumstances of Things, and drawn and enforced from the Virtues and Vices, the Passions and Inclinations of Mankind, you will see the whole Compass their Thoughts could be extended to, and observe, that they have neglected no Advantage to raise, and beautify, and enforce their Arguments. But what a poor, barren Field is this, compar'd with the glorious Harvest every Christian gathers in the Scriptures? The Treasures of Revelation are immense: Every Article of Faith, all that God hath done for us, and declar'd unto us, are so many Arguments of Persuasion; they are the only Principles of a Christian's Practice, and the Reason of his

K                      Duty

Duty: All the Passions and Affections of our Souls are moved by the most powerful Application. A Christian's Topics are the Attributes of God, the Manifestations of his infinite Love to Mankind: Our Creation, our Fall, our Redemption in the wonderful Method the Scriptures declare it in: The Rewards proposed, the Punishments denounced, Heaven and Hell, Happiness and Misery eternal; the Resurrection of our Bodies, the Righteousness and Awfulness of the last Judgment, the Majesty of the Judge, the Solemnity of the Proceedings, the Comfort and the Terrors of his final Sentence, Fear and Love, Desire of Happiness, Dread of Misery, Gratitude to move more generous Minds, Interest to prevail with lower Spirits, all enforced from eternal, infinite Considerations, are the inexhaustible  
Stores

*with Greek and Roman.* 195

Stores of a Christian Orator. And now, my Lord, with me the Wonder is, that our Divines do not exceed the greatest Orators of *Greece* and *Rome*, as far as our Topics of Argument and Persuasion are nobler, and infinitely more forcible than theirs: To argue for Virtue by displaying her Beauties, and shewing the Reasonableness and Convenience of the Practice, with no other Encouragement, than the secret Satisfaction of having done worthily and well, (so for want of other, making Virtue her own Reward) was all the Heathens could advance with any Certainty in the Cause; whereas the Christian is supplied with all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, which God hath abundantly poured forth upon the World.

The only Account, my Lord, that I can give, why *Tully*, for Example,



196 *Christian Orators compar'd, &c.*  
ample, could talk so well in the Cause of Virtue under all the Disadvantage of Argument, and why we under a clearer Light, and furnished with a richer Vein of Eloquence, do yet in Arguments of a moral Nature fall below him, is this, That since we do not write by Inspiration, we may fail in the Faculty and Power of Writing so much, that the Advantages of our Subject cannot set us upon the Level: 'Tis for this Reason I recommend Classic Learning, and a just Style in Divinity. We see the Effects in those that are Masters of them: And should an Orator ever rise of *Demosthenes's* Spirit, and *Tully's* Genius, and apply himself as an Orator to Divinity, work and labour his Subject by all the great Topics of Reasoning and Persuasion, what wonderful Productions should we behold? And if the pathetic,

thetic, persuasive Way of Writing, were more practised and enforced, I believe it would produce wonderful Effects among those who are not wanting in the Knowledge of their Duty, nor yet in the Conviction of its Truth, but are backward in their Practice of it, and forward to transgress it. I cannot leave this Argument without one Observation more, that if we will write of Morality only upon the Heathen Plan, and enforce it only from their Topics, we shall find all our Essays too weak, and demonstrate to the World, that a meer moral Christian is as much below a Pagan, as a divine or believing Christian is above him.

I am under an Engagement to your Lordship to say something of History towards forming your Style: I intended indeed to have spoken of it at large; but since it is enough

for me at present to mention only our most celebrated Historians, I will deferr what I designed to say of the Laws of History, and the Rules to be observed in reading it, till your Lordship shall give me Permission to trouble you farther in this Way.

All that seemeth necessary to the Business now before us, is to give your Lordship some Observations upon the historical Style, because, of all others, I take it to be the most difficult to attain in Perfection: In all other Subjects there is a greater Latitude and Compass for the Writer's Thoughts, a larger Field of Fancy and Imagination before him; but in History he is confined to the Facts and Occurrences he relateth. And these, as they are not alike entertaining, and ornamental in themselves, require great Force and Judgment in the Nar-

Narration to make them all agreeable. The worst Province an Historian can fall upon, is a Series of barren Times, in which nothing remarkable happeneth, to awake our Attention, or engage our Notice. Here the Writer is becalm'd, and goes on a dull, smooth, sleepy Pace, unless he hath Spirit of his own to breath into his Subject, and make it move with Life, as well as Truth, which must never be forsaken: The richest Fields of History are Scenes of Action and Commotion, where Nations are agitated by Wars abroad, or Factions at Home: The most delicate Part of an Historian, which requireth the deepest Penetration, and soundest Judgment, are the Councils of States and Princes, the Springs of Action, the principal Wheels, and cardinal Hinges, the Characters of Men, the Juncture of Times, the Inter-



est of Parties, their different Views, and the several Schemes they pursue; I do not intend to say what Talents are required in an Historian, it will run me off too much from the Style I am to speak of, if I should enlarge upon them.

Every body knoweth the general Design of History; and among those who are in all Points qualified to undertake it, they will excel who have the brightest Genius, and the most lively Wit. Perhaps your Lordship will wonder, I am sure many People will condemn me for this Assertion, but I cannot help it, my Lord, for I have always thought that the more we are bound up to an exact Narration, we want more Life and Fire to animate and inform the Story, and otherwise the Success of an Historian would depend on the Times he writeth of, more than on his Abilities.

lities. This most auspicious Reign of our most gracious Queen, hath opened the brightest and most glorious Scene that History can display. The Triumphs of her Arms, and the Happiness of her Councils, illustrate and adorn each other in a perfect Harmony and Co-operation. These Annals will shine in any Hand, the Subject is so great and glorious, it carrieth with it its own Light and Ornament; but nevertheless, that Genius which can beautify and enliven the stiller Times of Peace, will celebrate the Triumphs of uninterrupted Conquest in a Style most equal to the Fortune and Glory of our Arms.

History, my Lord, will not admit those Decorations other Subjects are capable of; the Passions and Affections are not to be moved with any Thing but the Truth of the Narration. All the Force and

Beauty must lie in the Order and Expression. To relate every Event with Clearness and Perspicuity, in such Words as best express the Nature of the Subject, is the chief Commendation of an Historian's Style. History giveth us a Draught of Facts and Transactions in the World. The Colours these are painted in, the Strength and Significancy of the several Faces, the regular Confusion of a Battle, the Distractions of a Tumult sensibly depicted, every Object, and every Occurrence so presented to your View, that while you read, you seem indeed to see them; this is the Art and Perfection of an historical Style. And your Lordship will observe, that those who have excell'd in History, have excell'd in this especially, and what hath made them the Standards of that Style, is the Clearness, the Life and Vigor of their

Herodotus, Thucydides, &c. 203  
their Expression, every where properly varied, according to the Variety of the Subjects they wrote on: For History and Narration are nothing but just and lively Descriptions of remarkable Events and Accidents.

For this Reason we praise *Herodotus* and *Thucydides* among the *Greeks*, for I will mention no more of them; and upon this Account we commend *Sallust* and *Livy* among the *Romans*; for though they all differ in their Style, yet they all agree in these common Excellencies. *Herodotus* displays a natural Oratory in the Beauty and Clearness of a numerous and solemn Diction; he floweth with a sedate and majestic Pace, with an easy Current, and a pleasant Stream. *Thucydides* doth sometimes write in a Style so close, that almost every Word is a Sentence, and every



204 Herodotus *and* Thucydides.

Sentence almost acquaints us with something new, so that from the Multitude of Clauses, and Variety of Matter crowded together, we should suspect him to be obscure; but yet so happy, so admirable a Master is he in the Art of Expression, so proper, and so full, that we cannot say whether his Diction doth more illustrate the Things he speaks of, or whether his Words themselves are not illustrated by his Matter. So mutual a Light do his Expression and Subject reflect on each other. His Diction, though it be pressed and close, is nevertheless great and magnificent, equal to the Dignity and Importance of his Subject. He first, after *Herodotus*, ventured to adorn the Historian's Style, to make the Narration more pleasing, by leaving the Flatness and Nakedness of former Ages. This is most observable in his

his Battles, where he does not only relate the meer Fight, but writeth with a martial Spirit, as if he stood in the hottest of the Engagement; and what is most excellent, as well as remarkable in so close a Style, is, that it is numerous and harmonious, that his Words are not labour'd nor forced, but fall into their Places in a natural Order, as into their most proper Situation.

*Sallust* and *Livy* your Lordship will read, I hope, with so much Pleasure, as to make a thorough and intimate Acquaintance with them. I have said a great many Pages back, that *Thucydides* and *Sallust* are generally compared, as *Livy* is with *Herodotus*; and since I am fallen upon their Characters, I cannot help touching the Comparisons. *Sallust* is represented as a concise, a strong and nervous Writer; and so far he agreeth with  
*Thucy-*

206 *These Historians compar'd.*

*Thucydides's* Manner : But he is also charged with being obscure, as concise Writers very often are, without any Reason. For, if I may judge by my own Apprehensions, as I read him, no Writer can be more clear, more obvious and intelligible. He hath not indeed, as far as I can observe, one redundant Expression; but his Words are all weighed and chosen, so expressive and significant, that I will challenge any Critic to take a Sentence of his, and express it clearer or better; his Contraction seemeth wrought and laboured. To me he appears as a Man, that consider'd and studied Perspicuity and Brevity to that Degree, that he would not retrench a Word which might help him to express his Meaning, nor suffer one to stand, if his Sense was clear without it. Being more diffused, would have weaken'd his Language,  
and

and have made it obscurer rather, than clearer. For a Multitude of Words only serves to cloud or dissipate the Sense; and though a copious Style in a Master's Hand is clear and beautiful, yet where Conciseness and Perspicuity are once reconciled, any Attempt to enlarge the Expressions, if it doth not darken, does certainly make the Light much feebler. *Sallust* is all Life and Spirit, yet grave and majestic in his Diction: His Use of old Words is perfectly right; there is no Affectation, but more Weight and Significancy in them; the Boldness of his Metaphors are among his greatest Beauties, they are chosen with great Judgment, and show the Force of his Genius: The Colouring is strong, and the Strokes are bold; and in my Opinion he chose them for the Sake of that Brevity he loved, to express more  
clearly



clearly and more forcibly, what otherwise he must have written in looser Characters with less Strength and Beauty. And no Fault can be objected to the justest and exactest of the *Roman* Writers.

*Livy*, my Lord, is the most considerable of the *Roman* Historians, if to the Perfection of his Style we join the Compass of his Subject, in which he hath the Advantage over all that wrote before him in any Nation, but the *Jewish*, especially over *Thucydides*, whose History, however drawn out into Length, is confin'd to the shortest Period of any, except what remaineth of *Salust*. No Historian could be happier in the Greatness and Dignity of his Subject, and none was better qualified to adorn it; for his Genius was equal to the Majesty of the *Roman* Empire, and every Way capable of the mighty Undertaking:  
He

Herodotus *and* Thucydides. 209

He is not so copious in Words, as abundant in Matter, rich in his Expression, grave, majestic, and lively; and if I may have Liberty to enlarge on the old Commendation, I would say his Style floweth with Milk and Honey, in such Abundance, such Pleasure and Sweetness, that when once your Lordship is Proficient enough to read him readily, you will go on with unwearied Delight, and never lay him out of your Hands without Impatience to resume him. We may resemble him to *Herodotus*, in the Manner of his Diction; but he is more like *Thucydides* in the Grandeur and Majesty of Expression; and if we observe the Multitude of Clauses in the Length of his Periods, perhaps *Thucydides* himself is not more crowded; only the Length of the Periods is apt to deceive us; and great Men among the Ancients,

as

210 *Livy and Sallust compar'd.*

as well as Moderns, have been induc'd to think this Writer was copious, because his Sentences were long. Copious he is indeed, and forcible in his Descriptions, not lavish in the Number, but exuberant in the Richness and Significancy of his Words. Your Lordship will observe, for I speak upon my own Observation, that *Livy* is not so easy and obvious to be understood as *Sallust*; the Experiment is made every where in reading five or six Pages of each Author together. The Shortness of *Sallust's* Sentences, as long as they are clear, shews his Sense and Meaning all the Way in an Instant: The Progress is quick and plain, and every three Lines gives us a new and compleat Idea; we are carried from one Thing to another with so swift a Pace, that we run as we read, and yet cannot, if we read distinctly,

run

*Livy and Sallust compar'd.* 211  
run faster than we understand him.  
This is the brightest Testimony  
that can be given of a clear and  
obvious Style. In *Livy*, my Lord,  
we cannot pass on so readily; we  
are forced to wait for his Meaning  
till we come to the End of the  
Sentence, and have so many Clau-  
ses to sort, and refer to their pro-  
per Places in the Way, that I must  
own I cannot read him so readily  
at Sight as I can *Sallust*; though  
with Attention and Consideration I  
understand him as well. He is not  
so easy, nor so well adapted to  
young Proficients, as the other;  
and is ever plainest, when his Sen-  
tences are shortest; which I think  
is a Demonstration. Some, per-  
haps, will be apt to conclude, that  
in this I differ from *Quintilian*, but  
I do not conceive so my self. For  
*Quintilian* recommends *Livy* before  
*Sallust*, rather for his Candor, and  
the



the larger Compass of his History; for he owneth a good Proficiency is requir'd to understand him; and I can only referr to the Experience of young Proficients, which of them is more open to their Apprehension. Distinction of Sentences, in few Words, provided the Words be plain and expressive, ever giveth Light to the Author, and carries his Meaning uppermost; but long Periods, and a Multiplicity of Clauses, however they abound with the most obvious and significant Words, do necessarily make the Meaning more retired, less forward and obvious to the View: And in this, my Lord, *Livy* may seem as crowded as *Thucydides*, if not in the Number of Periods, certainly in the Multitude of Clauses, which so disposed, do rather obscure, than illuminate his Writings. But in so rich, so majestic,

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jestic, so flowing a Writer, we may wait with Patience to the End of the Sentence, for the Pleasure still increaseth as we read. The Elegance and Purity, the Greatness and Nobleness of his Diction, his Happiness in Narration, and his wonderful Eloquence, are above all Commendation; and his Style, if we were to decide, is certainly the Standard of *Roman* History. For *Sallust*, I must own, is too impetuous in his Course; he hurries his Reader on too fast, and hardly ever alloweth him the Pleasure of Expectation, which in reading History, where it is justly raised upon important Events, is the greatest of all others.

Your Lordship will observe, by reading some ordinary Historians, and comparing them with these, that History is the most difficult Province of all others; and if there  
were

214 *History and Oratory compar'd.*

were not something in Novelty grateful to the Curiosity of Mankind, something in the Histories of our own Times and Nation, that engages us as Parties, and gives us an Interest in the Events; nothing would be read, but what was so beautifully express'd, as by the Charms of Language, and Force of a lively Representation, to attract our Eyes. Every great Historian would make a greater Orator; and perhaps the greatest Orator, even *Tully* himself, would fall below the Historian, should he attempt to rival him: For the Orator hath the Advantage of all Arts and Topics of Persuasion, but the Historian can only use the Abilities of an Orator to express and relate, and according to Truth, adorn the Subject of his History.

Having thus prepared your Lordship for reading them, so as to form  
some

some Judgment of their Style, from these ancient Standards I descend at last to our own Historians, who are no less various, than excellent, in their Style and Method, and do not come altogether short of the *Greek* and *Roman* Writers, but emulate both the Height and Spirit of the *Classic* Diction: The great Disadvantage our most celebrated Historians seem to labour under, is too long, and too tedious an Interruption, by the Insertion of Laws and Statutes, and Records in the Body of their Narration; at least, in making too particular and copious a Recital of them, whereas they had better be mention'd only in general, and thrown aside by themselves, as they commonly are, into an Appendix.

I will pass over the Historians of elder Date, as *Daniel*, Lord *Verulam*, Lord *Herbert*, and others, as  
too



216 *Lord Verulam. Sir W. Raleigh.*  
too remote from the present Standard; my Lord *Herbert* comes the nearest. Sir *Francis Bacon* was the greatest, and most universal Genius the World perhaps hath produc'd: His Knowledge universally comprehensive; his Imagination beautiful, just, and lively; his Language strong and expressive; and, if any where deficient, the Defects are to be imputed to the Peculiarity and Taste of the Age, not to the Judgment or Genius of the Author.

Sir *Walter Raleigh's* History of the World is a Work of so vast a Compass, such endless Variety, that no Genius, but one adventurous as his own, durst have undertaken that great Design. I do not apprehend any great Difficulty in Collecting, and Common-placing an universal History from the whole Body of Historians; that is nothing but mechanic

chanic Labour. But to digest the several Authors in his Mind, to take in all their Majesty, Strength, and Beauty, to raise the Spirit of meaner Historians, and to equal all the Excellencies of the best, is Sir *Walter's* peculiar Praise. His Style is the most perfect, the happiest, and most beautiful of the Age he wrote in, majestic, clear, and manly; and he appears every where so superior, rather than unequal to his Subject, that the Spirit of *Rome* and *Athens* seems to be breathed into his Work. In the sacred History alone, his Strength and his Spirit fail him: For nothing can preserve that sublime Simplicity, that awful Solemnity, and divine Majesty of the inspired Historians, but their own Words, as they are most plainly and properly render'd into any Language; this is an accidental Confirmation of a former

L

Remark,

218      *Sir Walter Raleigh.*

Remark, and I must finish *Sir Walter's* Character, with declaring my Opinion, that his admirable Performance in such a prodigious Undertaking, sheweth, that if he had attempted the History of his own Countrey, or his own Times, he would have equall'd even *Livy* and *Thucydides*; and the Annals of Queen *Elizabeth* by his Pen, without diminishing from the serious, judicious *Cambden*, (a Man ever to be remember'd with Honour) had been the brightest Glory of her Reign, and would have transmitted his History as the Standard of our Language even to the present Age: For certainly the Writers in that glorious Reign, and the Beginning of the next, are far preferable in their Style to any, till you come to King *Charles* the Second. In the long Interval of half an Age, you will hardly meet with one, besides the  
the

*B. of Sarum, B. of Rochester.* 219  
the *Royal Martyr*, whose Style is  
comparable to Sir *Philip Sidney*,  
*Bilſon*, *Hooker*, or *Raleigh*. So that  
we muſt deſcend almoſt from the  
Reformation, at leaſt to the Reſto-  
ration, for a Standard.

The Biſhop of \* *Salisbury* writeth with perfect Maſtery in a Language not native to him; and whatever his Principles may be, his Style I may venture to ſay is entirely *Engliſh*; except, as was objected to *Livy*, it may ſeem ſometimes to *bewray* his Countrey.

The Hiſtory of the † *Royal Society* ſhews how well Philoſophy becometh a Narration, and that the Progreſs of Knowledge is as entertaining as that of Arms; her Conqueſts more extended, and her Victories more glorious. The Diction is every where ſuited to the Subject:

\* *Burnet.* † *Sprat.*



220 *Earl of Clarendon.*

The whole Work speaketh the \* Author in a studied Easiness, and correct Accuracy of Expression, and a Style as much improved, as the Philosophy he treateth of.

I dare not attempt my Lord *Clarendon's* Commendation: To give his just Character, requireth a Happiness of Expression, a Clearness of Judgment, and Majesty of Style, equal to his own: Or to say all in a Word, that peculiar Felicity in designing Characters, in which he hath succeeded beyond Example. Your Lordship will want no Sollicitations to read the noblest and most impartial Historian this Nation hath produc'd. The Compassion and Resentment of his Thoughts, the noble Openness and Freedom of his Reflections, the glorious Debt he pays to Friendship, and the Veil

\* *Sprat*

he

he kindly draweth over the Sorrows and Reproach of his Countrey, are so admirably expressed in such lively Colours, that we are struck with Sympathy, and do feel by Reading, that he wrote from his Heart under the deepest Sense, and the most present Impression of the Evils he bewaileth. I have met with none that may compare with him in the Weight and Solemnity of his Style, in the Strength and Clearness of Diction, in the Beauty and Majesty of Expression, and that noble Negligence of Phrase, which maketh his Words wait every where upon his Subject, with a Readiness and Propriety, that Art and Study are almost Strangers to.

Reading these celebrated Authors will give your Lordship a true Taste of good Writing, and form you to a just and correct Style upon every Occasion that shall demand

your Pen. I would not recommend any of them to a strict Imitation, that is servile and mean, and you cannot propose an exact Copy of a Pattern, without falling short of the Original ; but if your Lordship once readeth them with a true Relish and Discernment of their Beauties, you may lay them aside, and be secure of writing with all the Graces of them all, without owing your Perfection to any. Your Style and Manner will be your own, and even your Letters upon the most ordinary Subjects, will have a native Beauty and Elegance in the Composition, which will equal them with the best Originals, and set them far above the common Standard.

Upon this Occasion, my Lord, I cannot pass by your favourite Author, the grave and facetious *Squire Bickerstaff*, who hath drawn  
Mankind

Mankind in every Dress, and every Disguise of Nature, in a Style ever varying with the Humours, Fancies, and Follies he describes. He hath shewed himself a Master in every Turn of his Pen, whether his Subject be light, or serious; and hath laid down the Rules of common Life with so much Judgment, in such agreeable, such lively and elegant Language, that from him your Lordship at once may form your Manners and your Style.

Perhaps I shall be blamed, if I recommend any Modern Comedies to your Reading. They are, indeed, most of them, so very prophane and obscene, that I had much rather caution your Lordship most earnestly against them, than give them the least Countenance in judging they may be read with Safety. But if the most innocent were chosen, and the most innocent



224 *Mr. Addison, Mr. Prior.*

are the best, I must needs say so much in their Behalf, that I know no Writers who are better able to give you a true Notion of familiar Wit and Writing, than the best and most correct of our Comic Authors.

And now, my Lord, you see I am enter'd upon Poetry, where little need be said after what I have said already. Perhaps I may touch some Characters again; but besides those I have named, I may recommend *Mr. Addison*, and *Mr. Prior*, as perfect Patterns of true poetic Writing. *Mr. Addison* is more laboured, like his great Master *Virgil*; he hath weighed every Word; nor is there an Expression in all his Lines, that can be changed for any juster, or more forcible than it self. *Mr. Prior* enjoys the freest and easiest Muse in the World, and perhaps is the only Man who may rival

val *Horace* in an admirable Felicity of Expression, both in the sublime and familiar Way. Like our celebrated *Cowley*, he hath excell'd in all Kinds of Poetry : In his Works we meet an Assembly of the Muses; since the *Roman Swan* expir'd, none hath taken bolder and happier Flights, or touch'd the Lyre with a more masterly Hand; and since *Chaucer's* Days, none hath told a merry or heroic Tale so well. In the best Collection of the Miscellanies, your Lordship will read with Pleasure the most perfect Pieces of Composition the greatest Masters have produc'd; and without entering into the Characters of any, it will be enough to say, they are all admirable.

To these I may add some of more ancient Date, and though their Style is out of the Standard now, there are in them still some

226 Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespear.

Lines so extremely beautiful, that our Modern Language cannot reach them. *Chaucer* is too old, I fear, for so young Company as your Lordship; but *Spencer*, though he be antiquated too, hath still Charms remaining to make your Lordship enamour'd of him. His antique Verse has Music in it to ravish any Ears, that can be sensible of the softest, sweetest Numbers, that ever flow'd from a Poet's Pen.

*Shakespear* is a wonderful Genius. a single Instance of the Force of Nature, and the Strength of Wit. Nothing can be greater, and more lively than his Thoughts; nothing nobler, and more forcible, than his Expression. The Fire of his Fancy breaketh out into his Words, and sets his Reader on a Flame: He maketh the Blood run cold or warm, and is so admirable a Master of the Passions, that he raises.

raises your Courage, your Pity, and your Fear, at his Pleasure; but he delighteth most in Terror.

*Milton*, my Lord, is the Assertor of Poetic Liberty, and would have freed us from the Bondage of Rhime, but like Sinners, and like Lovers, we hug our Chain, and are pleas'd in being Slaves. Some, indeed, have made some faint Attempts to break it, but their Verse had all the Softness and Effeminacy of Rhime, without the Music: And *Dryden* himself, who sometimes struggled to get loose, always relaps'd, and was faster bound than ever; but Rhime was his Province, and he could make the Tinkling of his Chains harmonious. Mr. *Philips* hath trod the nearest in his great Master's Steps, and hath equall'd him in his Verse more than he falleth below him in the Compass and Dignity of his Subject.



The *Shilling* is truly *Splendid* in his Lines, and his Poems will live longer than the unfinish'd Castle, as long as *Blenheim* is remember'd, or *Cyder* drunk in *England*. But I have digressed from *Milton*, and that I may return, and say all in a Word, his Style, his Thoughts, his Verse, are as superior to the Generality of other Poets, as his Subject. His Disloyalty alone throws a Cloud upon his Glory; and we stand amaz'd to think that Man could ever be a Rebel, who had seen, as it were, and described, in all the Pomp of Terror, the Rebellion and Punishment of the Apostate Angels. For though his *Paradise Lost* was indeed written after the Rebellion, we may well imagine, that such a Man as he, had the same Thoughts and Theory in his Mind, which he afterwards express'd in his Poem: And  
it

Cowley, Waller, Granville. 229  
it is plain he continu'd a Rebel in  
his Heart to the last.

*Cowley* I need not insist on, when  
his Character is so admirably drawn  
by so great a Master, as I have na-  
med already.

*Waller*, for the Music of his  
Numbers, the Courtliness of his  
Verse, the Easiness and Happiness  
of his Thoughts on a Thousand  
Subjects, deserves your Lordship's  
Consideration more, perhaps, than  
any other, because his Manner and  
his Subjects are more common to  
Persons of Quality, and the Affairs  
of a Court. Mr. *Granville*, my  
Lord, hath rivall'd him in his finest  
Address, and is as happy as he ever  
was, in raising modern Compli-  
ments upon ancient Story, and set-  
ting off the *British* Valour and the  
*English* Beauty, with the old Gods  
and Goddesses.

Sir

Sir *John Denham* is famed for his *Coopers-Hill*; and *Windsor* is more honoured in being the Subject of his Prospect, than the *Hill* is in being the Subject of his Poem. For *Windsor* is only the Ornament of his *Hill*, but his Poem is the Ornament of *Windsor*.

I cannot help inserting into the Body of this Book that Character which I think Sir *John Denham* so highly deserveth, for his excellent Version of the Psalms: They are so admirable in our old Prose Translation, that I despair of ever seeing them equall'd in Verse; but Sir *John*, by a noble Simplicity of Style, by a Clearness and Easiness of Expression, by an Exactness and Harmony of Numbers, hath made them so delightful to the Ear, and so pleasing to the Reader, that as a meer poetical Work, it must be read with all the Satisfaction which

Pieces

Pieces perfect in their Kind can give us: But this is vastly rais'd, when we consider the Subject Matter various as the several Occasions, and devout Passions of the Psalmist, and observe the Translator varying his Style, and every where forming himself to the Spirit of the Original, sometimes in humble Acknowledgments of a repenting Sinner, sometimes in the chearful Voice of Praise and Thanksgiving: In some Psalms delivering Divine Precepts with all the Plainness, Simplicity, and Majesty of Verse; in others, celebrating the Goodness and Providence of God throughout the World: In some recounting the great Things God had done for his People in an historical, but a great and solemn Narration of the Wonders, the Mercies, and Deliverances vouchsafed unto them: In others displaying the Works of Creation;



ation, the Might and Majesty of the Creator, his Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, in the sublimest Strains, above the Reach of all mortal Eloquence. The Dignity of the Original is duly regarded in all the Parts of this Translation, and the Divine Spirit is best preserv'd, in being the least mix'd with any human Conceits. In his other Pieces this honourable Bard rose above most others, in an Age that most abounded with good Poets; but much more in this Translation, by which he hath not only rais'd his Fame, but himself, to Heaven.

Several other of our Poets deserve to be remember'd, and they should not be omitted, if I thought these Sheets a Record. Mr. *Tickell*, especially, old Friendship would not suffer me to forget, could any Suffrage of mine add at all to his  
Commen-

Commendation. It is enough to say, he was Friend to the excellent Mr. *Addison*, by whom his Poetry was approv'd, and his Person belov'd. I have already mention'd Mr. *Dryden* on the wrong Side of a Comparifon, and it would be Injustice to pafs him by, when I may mention him on the right. For certainly there never rose a happier Genius, and a more absolute Master of Language and Numbers. All his Poems were extreamly studied, and he made every Thing he borrow'd so much his own, that he improv'd the brightest Passages of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and repaid them with abundant Interest.

*Otway* writes with so fine a Spirit, with so perfect a Command of our Passions, his Language is so very beautiful, and all his tender Strains so very moving in the most sensible Words, that, perhaps, your  
 Lordship

Lordship will no where meet the Passions touch'd with a more masterly Hand, or express'd in more lively Colours.

I have made no distinct mention of Tragedy, and the most celebrated of our Writers that have rais'd the *English* Stage as high as the *Athenian*; they have most excell'd, when they form'd their Plays on the *Grecian* Plan, or built them, at least, after the ancient Models. And where the Unities are preserv'd by a great Genius, and a masterly Hand, I think the Structure of our Tragedies more beautiful than the ancient Buildings. Your Lordship, I hope, will never act a Part where that Language is requir'd; and I have omitted to speak of the Tragic Style, because 'tis rais'd above the ordinary Sentiments and Expression of Mankind. The Persons of the Drama speak as they  
are

are dress'd, in Buskins. The Mind is in too much Commotion, and agitated by those Passions that can be only rais'd upon such a Crisis, as worketh up all the Actions of Life to the last and most important Event. Yet, my Lord, our Tragedies may be read with great Advantage to Style and Language, if we can bring them down to our calmer Thoughts, and the stiller Scenes of Life, and only use them to be better acquainted with the Nature, Violence, Degrees, and Expression of all the various Passions that exercise and distract the Mind of Man. Treatises are of no Use to inform us upon this great Subject, but when the Passions are practically display'd, all their Springs discover'd, and the whole tumultuous Theory presented in lively Actions on the Stage, we see and feel the Agitation of the Actors in  
our



our selves, we do really put on all their personated Passions, they strike upon our Souls, and Nature answers from within. We have but few great Masters in this noble Art. After *Shakespear*, whom I have nam'd already, and *Beaumont*, and *Fletcher*, who have sometimes touch'd the Passions with a masterly Hand, we must come down to *Dryden* and *Otway*, who stand almost alone, unless *Lee* may be joined unto them; but he is too much out of the Way, too much in a Passion to be named, and therefore we will put *Southern* into his Room. Afterwards we have none of Consideration, but *Congreve*, *Rowe*, and Mr. *Granville*, and two *Oxford* Scholars, who need not be pointed out.

I do not insist on the particular Character of these Authors, thinking it enough to my Purpose to  
name

name them, as the most distinguished of our Tragic Writers.

*Suckling*, and other *Bards* celebrated in their Time, I forbear; and *Ben Johnson* I dare not meddle with, lest he, or some Body furly as himself, should rise, and rebuke me for not writing of him with that Labour and Exactness he always wrote with.

My Lord, I have given you a List of Poets almost equal to the *Ancients*, and this is the greatest Character that can be given of *Modern Works*: For though I think *Spencer* and *Shakespear* as great Genius's as ever were produced in *Rome* or *Athens*, they will not bear a strict Comparison upon all the Beauties of Writing. *Milton*, alone, in *Epic Writing* hath transcended the *Greek* and the *Latin Poet*: He hath excelled the *First* in the Force and Richness of Imagination; and  
hath

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hath rivalled the *Last* in Justness of Thought, and Exactness of the Work. *Spencer* may, perhaps, dispute the *Pastoral*, even with *Theocritus*, for I dare prefer him to *Virgil*, and in him alone the Sweetness and Rusticity of the *Doric* Muse was to be found, till of late Years some happy Genius's among our selves have assembled all the Beauties of the *Arcadian* Poetry, and restored their Simplicity, Language, and Manners, to the Swains. Here then, my Lord, we stand. I may with great Modesty and Justice own, that several Pieces of *English* Composure are nothing inferior to the choicest Productions of Antiquity; but I cannot pronounce so upon the whole, upon their Writers and ours. I must beg Pardon, therefore, if I fall into Sir *William Temple's* Party in this Article of *Ancient and Modern Learning*, and  
give

give the Preference to the great Originals of *Greece* and *Rome*; I am the more confirmed in this Judgment, by observing that our greatest Masters in Composition have been always of the same Opinion; and it would be hard for the Patrons of *Modern Learning*, when they can show nothing of their Own, that may compare with the *Ancients*, to argue for their Opinion from the Writings of those who disclaim it.

But, my Lord, I must not enter into this Controversy now; and having given you these few Directions for the forming your Style by reading the celebrated Writers of *Italy* and *England*, I shall take my Leave of this Subject, after I have just mentioned this one Particular, That perhaps the best Way to discern the Beauties of good Writing, is to read some of the worst.



worst. *Ogilby* and *Dryden* will shew you the Difference, and when you perceive the insufferable Dullness of the one, you will see more clearly the Brightness of the other. Light, indeed, will shew it self; but a Jewel looketh brighter in a Heap of Coals, than in the Lustre of a Crown; and Beauty is more conspicuous in the Neighbourhood of Deformity, than in the Circle of the Court.

I hope your Lordship will not think I have recommended any Thing to you below your Quality: Your Fortunes place you far above the Necessity of Learning, but nothing can set you above the Ornament of it: And I am the more bold to press it upon your Lordship, because these Accomplishments appear with greater Advantages, and do really fit more handsomely

*The late D. of Devonshire.* 241  
fomely on Persons of Quality, than  
any other.

The late Duke of *Devonshire* deserves a Name in the foremost List of our *English* Writers; but I reserved him to the last, because he was of your Lordship's Alliance, and I thought his Name would better recommend what I have offer'd, than any Thing else I can say. He was not only the finest Gentleman of his Time, but one of the finest Scholars in every Part of polite Learning: Whatever Parts of his Character have been disputed, this Palm hath been yielded with the greatest Justice and Applause; and when Your Lordship thinks how great an Ornament he was to the *English* Court and Nation, you will find his Learning was as great an Ornament to him.

To the *Father* I would beg Leave to add the *Son*, who hath lately

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left

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left all that had the Honour to know him, in great Affliction for his Death. He inherited the Excellencies as well as Honours of his Family; and with all those good Qualities, which can render a Man beloved and revered under the great Characters of a *Patriot* and a *Christian*, he was eminently distinguish'd for that Knowledge and Politeness in *Books, Paintings, Sculpture, Architecture, and Medals*, which I may call the peculiar Accomplishments of a Nobleman; and it must be a Pleasure to see his most worthy *Successor*, and your *self*, so emulous to be distinguish'd in them.

I am ashamed to present these Thoughts in so ill an Hand; but your Lordship will consider that we Scholars are generally bad Penmen: We seldom regard the mechanic Part of Writing; though nothing  
should

should be put into your Lordship's Hands that looketh like so rude a Draught.

Such as it is, it is humbly offer'd to your Lordship with my constant Prayers for your Prosperity; and I hope your Lordship will accept it as a small Testimony of the Honour I have for your Illustrious House, from,

*My LORD,*

*Your Lordship's*

*Most Humble, and*

*Most Obedient Servant,*

Belvoir, Dec.

29. 1710.

HENRY FELTON.





